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OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE

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PlayStation 2

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine Issue 84 (September 2004)

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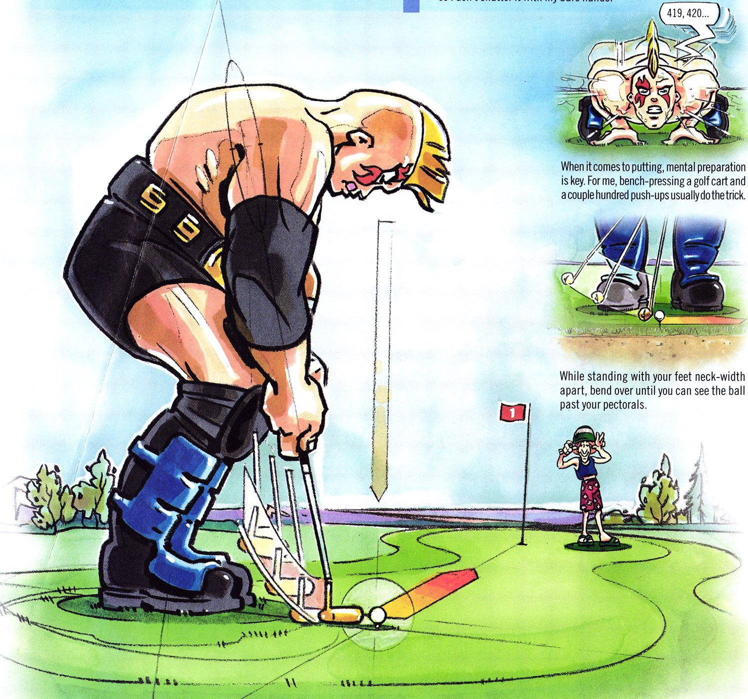
HOT SHOTS TIPS 1

PuttCrusher04 on the Short Game

There are two places I like to blow off steam. One is the wrestling ring, where I see how high I can throw other wrestlers. The other is the putting green. A good putt depends on a proper grip. I grip the putter firmly, but just loose enough so I don't shatter it with my bare hands.



When it comes to putting, mental preparation is key. For me, bench-pressing a golf cart and a couple hundred push-ups usually do the trick.

While standing with your feet neck-width apart, bend over until you can see the ball past your pectorals.

The cast of golfers is crazier. The golf physics are sweeter. And the chance to out-birdie other players online is finally here. Play real-time tourneys online with up to 30 players, or go head-to-head, chatting it up during each round. Hot Shots Golf® FORE! Golf for the People.

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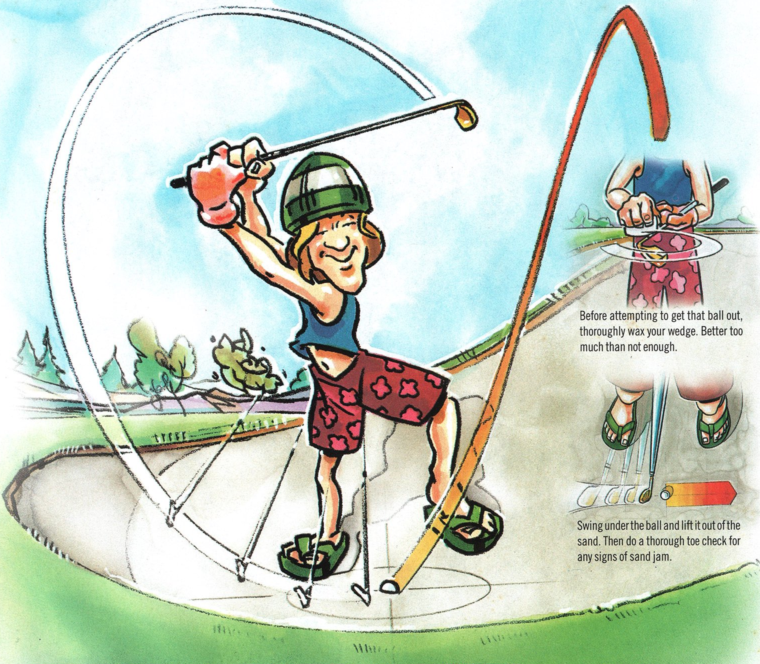
2

BunkerBreaker007 on Getting Out of the Sand

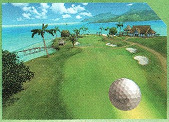
People always ask how I learned to conquer these mighty sand traps. I don't know. That's like asking how gale-force winds learn to blow just as a dude's ready to tee off. All I do know is that ever since I was a kid, I liked surfing near sand, sitting on sand, even eating sand. But that was on a dare.

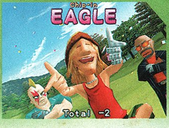
HOT SHOTS GOLF FORE!



Before attempting to get that ball out, thoroughly wax your wedge. Better too much than not enough.

Swing under the ball and lift it out of the sand. Then do a thorough toe check for any signs of sand jam.





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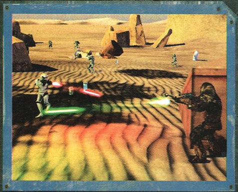

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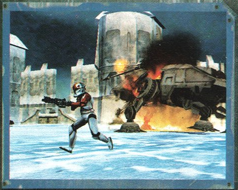

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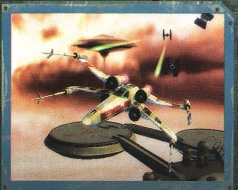

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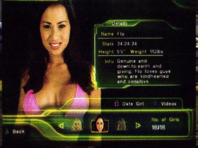

Details

Name Flo

Stats 34-24-34

Height 5'5" Weight 112lbs

Info Genuine and down-to-earth and giving. Flo loves guys who are kindhearted and sensitive.

☐ Date Girl ✕ Videos

△ Back

No. of Girls 18/18

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eutechnyx

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Mature Sexual Themes
Simulated Gambling

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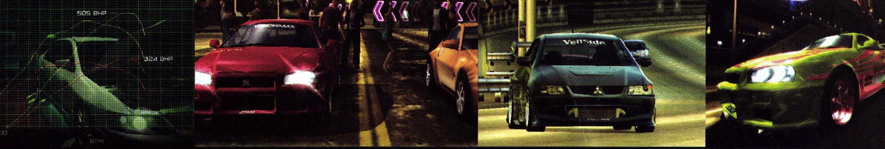
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PS2.1UP.COM
Everything PS2 from all of the Ziff Davis Media Game Group magazines, including the *Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine, Electronic Gaming Monthly, GMR,* and 1UP.com.

RACING.1UP.COM
This issue is packed with racing-game info, so you might want to view your Web experience with all the nonracing stuff filtered out. There are similar pages for most popular genres.

BOARDS.1UP.COM
Do you feel an aching need to express your opinions on the radical design departure exhibited in the upcoming *Brave Fencer Musashi* sequel? What luck! You can talk to other similarly anally retentive people (like us) right here.

CLUBS.1UP.COM
Giancarlo runs a club called Club Sandwich. You too can be the proprietor of such an establishment if you're so inclined simply by clicking here and setting it up. You get your own URL, a club journal, a club message board, and a place to post images.

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GRANTURISMOCLUB.1UP.com
Love the *Gran Turismo* games? Head here and hook up with other 1UP readers to talk about *GT4* and racing games in general.

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PlayStation
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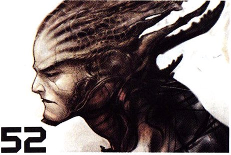

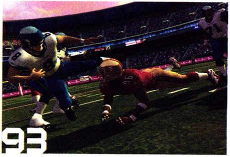

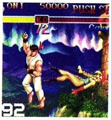

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You love us not. You love us. You love us not. All at opm@ziffdavis.com.

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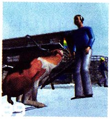

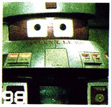

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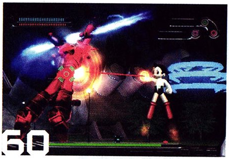

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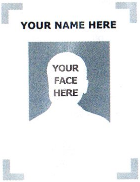
The all-new 1UP is here, and it's exploding with new features! We've still got all of that great daily content you've come to know and love, but we're now the first-ever destination for gamers to meet, play, get informed, and show off.

Check out the **cool new stuff** you can do!

If you have a GameFace, we have a place for you to put it.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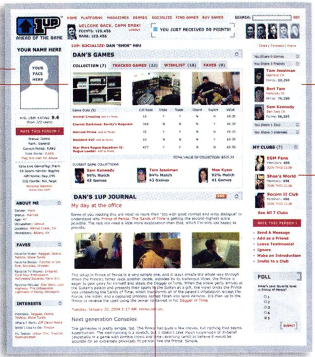
YOUR GAMES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92% Match
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Shoe's World
JOIN THIS CLUB
Socom II Club
JOIN THIS CLUB
See All 7 Clubs
RATE THIS PERSON >
Send A Message
Add as a Friend
Leave Testimonial
Ignore
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DAN'S 1UP JOURNAL
My day at the office
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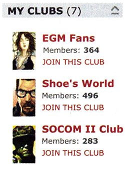

MY CLUBS (7)

EGM Fans
Members: **364**
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Shoe's World
Members: **496**
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SOCOM II Club
Members: **283**
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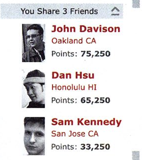

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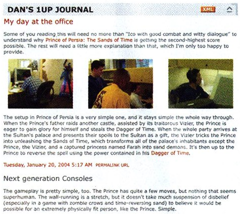
YOUR FRIENDS

You've got a voice, let it be heard! Tell everyone what you're playing or doing.



DAN'S 1UP JOURNAL

My day at the office

Some of you reading this will need no more than "Ico with good combat and witty dialogue" to understand why Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time is getting the second-highest score possible. The rest will need a little more explanation than that, which I'm only too happy to provide.

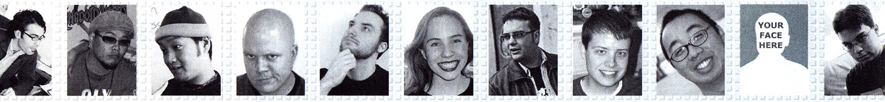
The setup in Prince of Persia is a very simple one, and it stays simple the whole way through. When the Prince's father raids another castle, assisted by its traitorous Vizier, the Prince is eager to gain glory for himself and steals the Dagger of Time. When the whole party arrives at the Sultan's palace and presents their spoils to the Sultan as a gift, the Vizier tricks the Prince into unleashing the Sands of Time, which transforms all of the palace's inhabitants except the Prince, the Vizier, and a captured princess named Farah into sand demons. It's then up to the Prince to reverse the spell using the power contained in his Dagger of Time.

Tuesday, January 20, 2004 5:17 AM PERMALINK URL

Next generation Consoles

The gameplay is pretty simple, too. The Prince has quite a few moves, but nothing that seems superhuman. The wall-running is a stretch, but it doesn't take much suspension of disbelief (especially in a game with zombie crows and time-reversing sand) to believe it would be possible for an extremely physically fit person, like the Prince. Simple.

YOUR JOURNAL



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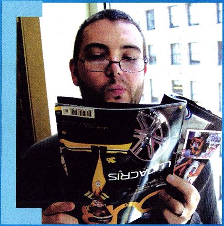
THE ROAD AHEAD

GRAN TURISMO 4 MAY BE AS GOOD AS IT GETS ON PS2



Racing games dominate the charts every year, but something has happened recently... they've changed. Just as sports games evolved as extreme sports found their place in the overall scheme of things, we're now finding that racers are no longer simply track-based affairs in which you race a set number of laps or against the clock. We gathered the brains behind eight of the most significant driving games this year, including *GT4* creator Kazunori Yamauchi, and asked them to explain why everything's changing and where it's all leading. You can read what they have to say on page 70.

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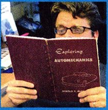
DANAJ.1UP.COM never got to be part of a club when she was young, probably because of that whole skin-disease thing, so the club aspect of 1UP.com has her very excited. Her favorite is Club Sandwich, even though moderator Giancarlo won't allow posts about turkey burgers. But he never said no to veggie burgers....

OPMJOER.1UP.COM has been filling his blog space with sordid tales of politics, poker, and pig roasting, as well as a game of *Burnout 3* one-upsmanship (get it? GET IT? 1UP!!) he's engaged in with John and Dana. As of this writing, Joe still holds the record with 2.18 million points on Tram-Pull. Go ahead and try to beat it.

C-BAKE.1UP.COM, being the People's Editor and all, is always receptive to questions from readers. If you send him an e-mail through 1UP.com, he might even post the answer to his blog. In fact, he probably will. Unless your question is just plain dumb. Or if he's feeling particularly lazy that day. It's one or the other.

SCOOTER.1UP.COM must warn you that if you're looking for info on the inner workings of magazines or a serious analysis of foxes working at Wal-Mart and the effect their employment has on rabies rates, then don't read his blog. All you'll find there is some sort of lexical diarrhea that pours from his mind.

GIANCARLOV.1UP.COM has recently discovered the magic of instant-pancake mix. Now he's relegated himself to a strict diet of pancakes for breakfast, pancakes for lunch, and a sensible pancake for dinner. If it doesn't have pancakes, he wants nothing to do with it. Look for further eating updates on his blog.



OPM_BOBC.1UP.COM has taken his '93 Saturn SL in to get pimped out. The first thing to go is the dull maroon finish that has eroded in the CA sun. Future plans for "the Renegader" include 20-inch rims, a muffler whistle, and an Easy-Bake Oven. Read all about it and other mundaneness in Bob's regularly updated blog.

GURLOK.1UP.COM hasn't had good luck lately—he's spent a week in a hospital thanks to an appendectomy, and his dog got lost in his native land of Iowegia. But he's finally found time for what matters—riding his chocobo in Vana'diel and shooting people in *SOCOM II*. Want to challenge him? Leave a message on his 1UP page.

OPM_TINERS.1UP.COM hasn't written much in her blog yet, but she likes receiving messages, so wish her a happy birthday on August 26. If you're looking for gift ideas, she likes sterling silver roses, English Breakfast tea, vanilla-scented candles, and Pocky. But the real way to her heart is to buy her a Cal Alumni license-plate holder.

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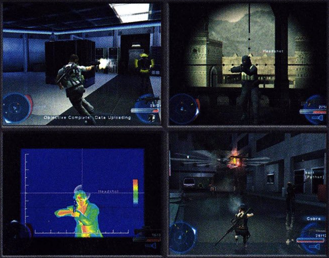

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REPORT TO: GABE LOGAN, I.P.C.A. COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

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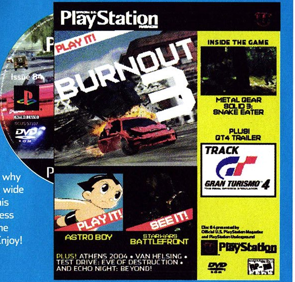
ON THE DVD

TRY BEFORE YOU BUY

Variety is the spice of life, which is why we here at *OPM* are excited to offer you a wide range of PS2 goodness to give a whirl. This month's goodies range from racing madness to vampire hunting to zooming through the skies courtesy of rocket-powered boots. Enjoy!



Issue 84
NTSC U/C
SCUS 97337
PlayStation
PLAY IT!
BURNOUT 3
INSIDE THE GAME
METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER
PLUS! GT4 TRAILER
TRACK
GRAN TURISMO 4
PLAY IT!
ASTRO BOY
SEE IT!
STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT
PLUS! ATHENS 2004 • VAN HELSING • TEST DRIVE: EVE OF DESTRUCTION • AND ECHO NIGHT: BEYOND!
Disc 84 presented by Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine and PlayStation Underground
PlayStation
DVD

[PLAY IT!]

ALSO TRY... *Uoh*, the Japanese import available in the United States only on the *OPM* demo disc. If you like fish, and if you like bearded frogs that speak Japanese, then this is your lucky day, friend.

BURNOUT 3

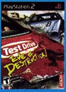
We feel the need, the need for speed. We also feel the need to smash the crap out of a lot of other cars. If your needs are similar to our needs, then this is a demo you want to play—now.

VAN HELSING

News flash: Digital flowing-haired Hugh Jackman is no less effeminate than real-life flowing-haired Hugh Jackman. No, it's not a demo of the Tony Awards, it's everyone's fave vampire hunter!

ECHO NIGHT: BEYOND

We're not sure how one goes beyond an echo night (or even what an echo night is), but going to a lunar station haunted by a bunch of sad and evil ghosts is probably a good start.



TEST DRIVE: EVE OF DESTRUCTION

In this giant demo of the latest installment in the oldest racing franchise, try your hand at the Figure 8 Jump, Demolition Derby, Jump Race, or Suicide Surprise.

ASTRO BOY

He's everybody's favorite hot pants–wearing robot, and you have the chance to fly a mile in his shiny red boots in this demo, which also features the evil Dr. Tenma and archenemy Atlas.

ATHENS 2004

What? You somehow managed to miss all 1,200 hours of televised Olympics coverage? Well, dry your tears—you can still sample the 100-meter dash, high jump, and discus throw, thanks to this demo.

[WATCH IT!]

BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE! That chatterbox Hideo Kojima has even more to say about *Metal Gear Solid 3*, plus interviews with the talented people behind the voices of *Hot Shots Golf Fore!*

STREET RACING SYNDICATE

Feel like you're a little short on cash lately? Not been getting enough attention from the ladies? *SRS* would like to remedy those problems.

AREA 51

Six-eyed aliens, bloody beating mutated hearts, poison-green injections, men in biohazard suits—we couldn't have come up with a better set of game ingredients if we'd written it ourselves.

ACE COMBAT 5: THE UNSUNG WAR

If this tale of two factions fighting against each other to achieve peace doesn't touch you, then you're really a cold, heartless son of a bitch.

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT

It's everything you've wanted from a *Star Wars* game—32 players duking it out on battlefields from all six movies. Check out the two videos for all the juicy details.

FORGOTTEN REALMS: DEMON STONE

There are demons. There are stones. But there is only one demon stone, which apparently exists in the forgotten realm, making it difficult to remember.

GRAN TURISMO 4

The people who make *GT4* know that a pimped-out ride needs to be shown and bragged about, which is why they've added a photo mode. See more on the latest installment of Track *GT4*.

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Did you buy a copy of our magazine that did not contain a demo CD? Simply send the receipt in an envelope marked "*OPM* Replacement Disc" to the address below with the name and address of the store plus your phone number and address and we'll send you the disc. Make sure you specify which month the corresponding disc belongs to in order to ensure you get the right one.

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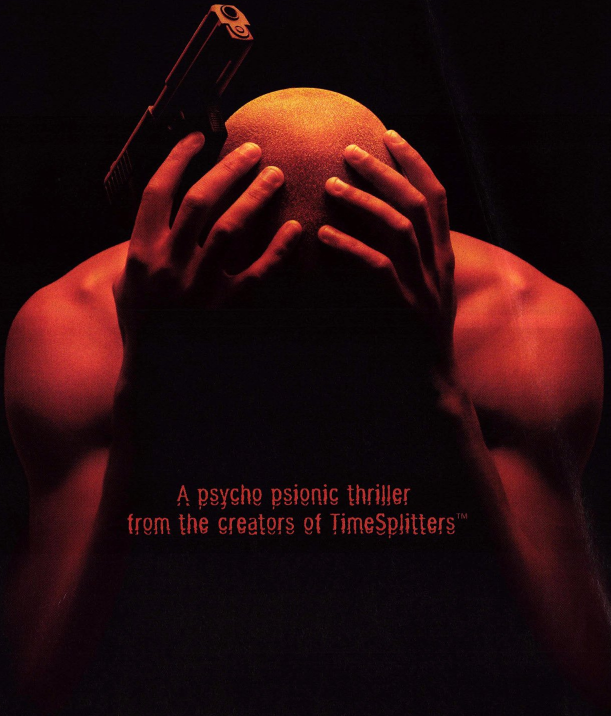
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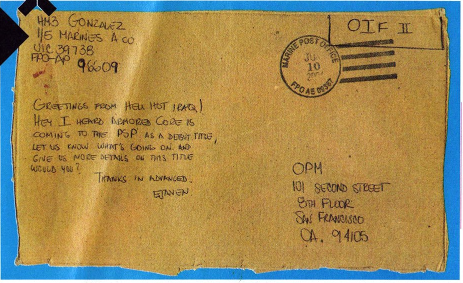

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Greetings from Hell Hot Iraq!
Hey I heard Armored Core is coming to the PSP as a debut title, let us know what's going on. And give us more details on this title would you?
Thanks in advanced.
EJaven

OPM
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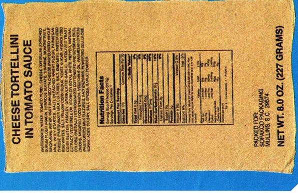
LETTER OF THE MONTH

This probably isn't really Letter of the Month material. We just thought it was cool that he wrote it on a military ration box.



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WEB OF DECEIT?

I just got my new issue today, and I hoped to see *Spider-Man 2* get a 5-star (octagon, sorry) score. I quickly flipped to the Reviews section and scanned the page. Nothing. I scanned it again, ditto. So I flipped to Contents, looking for the list of games covered. It wasn't on it. But then I thought fast and noted that the game had just come out today. Then I remembered an article on *Batman: Dark Tomorrow* that said that if a review copy was issued late, something was wrong. I hope this isn't the case with *Spider-Man 2*.

Ronald Purpura
via e-mail

You're right, often we'll get review copies late (or not at all) if the game isn't expected to do well. We always assume that this is because the publisher would like to get some sales in before the bad news gets around. However, this is not the case with *Spider-Man 2*. Instead, it's a combination of Marvel's licensing practices and Activision's desire to lock in exclusive early reviews. As you may have noticed this month, though, you're not missing all that much.

SHARK TANK

I recently read an article where you rated the product GameShark Live, and you said that using cheats could shorten a game's life span. How could a GameShark shorten a game's life span? Could it damage the disc? Or the memory card?

Justin Fang
via e-mail

No, no, no—we meant that using cheats shortens the *time* you'll spend on the game. You know, since you won't need to try as hard to beat it. A GameShark won't damage your games.

RANDOM ACTS

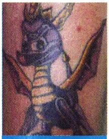
In Issue 83, I noticed that you refer to the fact that random battles in RPGs suck major ass. I'd just like you to know that I agree with you 100 percent. It all started back when I had a Super Nintendo. I played a game called *Chrono Trigger* that turned my life around. It was the best frickin' game ever! I noticed it was produced by Square, and I decided I'd check out another title of theirs: *Final Fantasy* (it doesn't matter which one I tried; I try to forget that period of my life). At first, the game was all right, but then I reached the 7th Circle of Hell: random battles. Monsters appeared out of nowhere; there was nowhere to run, nowhere to hide. I died almost instantly. I've hated *Final Fantasy* games ever since. *Final Fantasy XII* may change my mind. Let's hope so, because *Final Fantasy* games have some pretty sweet story lines and awesome graphics.

Kurt Prenger
via e-mail

Yeah, random battles sure are annoying. We're not sure we'd completely give up on *FF* games because of them, though.

RICE CITY

In the August 2004 issue, you wrote that *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* was the third best-



TATTOO OF THE MONTH

This Spyro tattoo is on my friend Frank Ferraro (we added Sparks after his kids told us they are always together). I have my PS2 in my shop, and it's great to get in a quick game between tattoos.

Mark Lackenbacher
Marky Mark's Tattoos
Saugerties, NY
markymark@ulster.net

GAMERS ARE TALKING ABOUT

STRAIGHT FROM THE OPM MESSAGE BOARD

Our monthly roundup of hot topics, gathered from the *OPM* message board at opm.1UP.com.

CAT SCRATCH FEVER

As we went to press, the widespread opening of *Catwoman* in theaters was still a week away. Will these comments be eerily prescient a week from now? Or unreasonably pessimistic? Let's watch!

"This looks pathetic," says **Apocalypse_Cow**. "The writing looks terrible, the CGI looks like a poor PS2 FMV, and no one's ever actually fighting, based on the trailer. It looks hackneyed and poor and just [like] a terrible movie."

Carnal_Zen agrees, saying "The best we can hope from this film is that it'll be better than *Free Willy 3*."

Looks like it's unanimous, with **zjr1717** chiming in, "*Catwoman* might surpass *Van Helsing* as the biggest pile of crap to be released this summer, and that's saying something."

FAULT LINES

The debut of the *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* box art had the boards buzzing. **Spideybuddy** appeared uninterested. "Wow, it's almost the same as the last two. Kind of sums up the game, huh?"

There was widespread disagreement, with **magicthighs** saying, "It actually makes me want it just a little more than I already did. Poker chips, huh? That would be sweet if you could earn some coin playing cards."

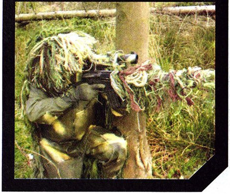
"Why does Rockstar keep pushing the bike thing?" asked **KillaGorilla**. "Bikes are only cool when you are, like, 10 and don't have a car yet. They should have added a cooler vehicle, like a hovercraft!"

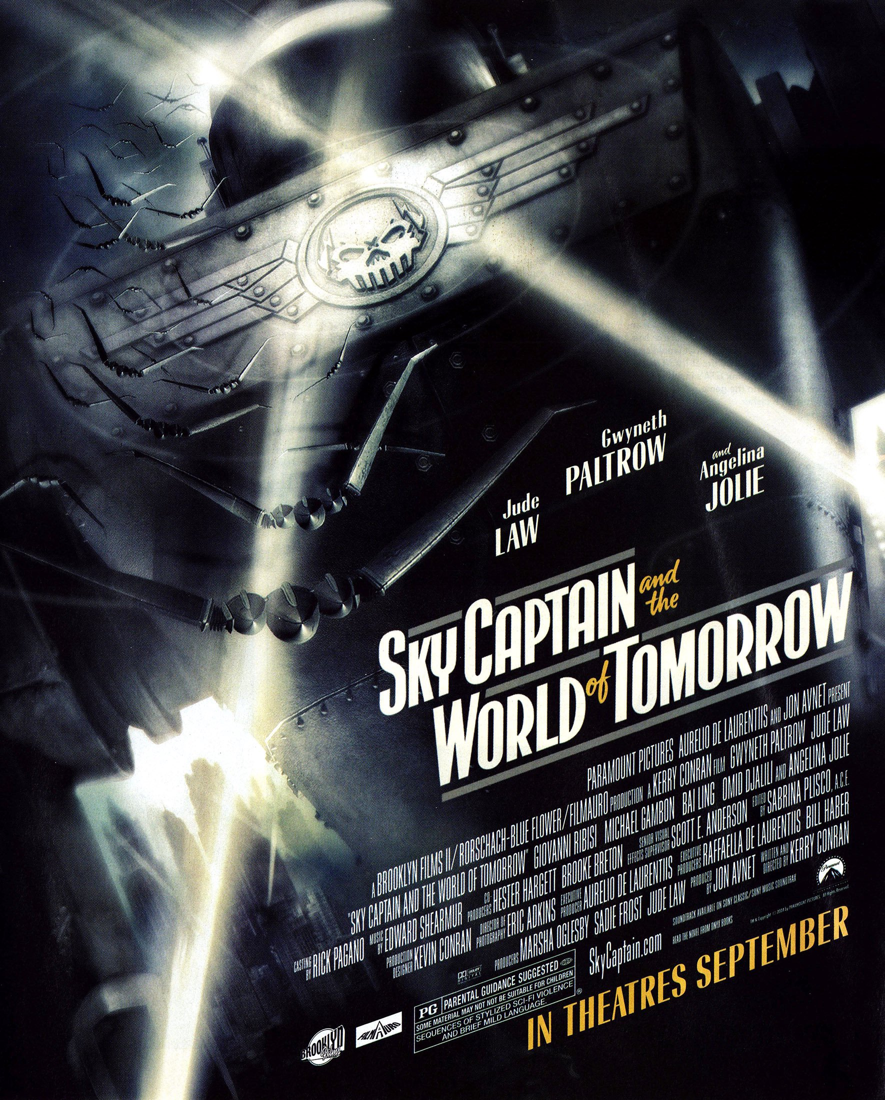
SOCOM DREAMS

In a thread about features fans would like to see in *SOCOM III*, **TrinitySon** busted out the following: "I want ghillie suits [see below] to give snipers the proper SEAL attire."

"I want to be able to choose the game type on each map," said **Blake D.** "One other thing I was thinking of is being able to climb trees. Maybe you'd have to bring something from the armory to get up the tree—like a rope for example—but you could get up trees and snipe from there."

"Vehicles would also be a nice little touch," opined **Arkinum**.





Gwyneth
PALTROW

and
Angelina
JOLIE

Jude
LAW

SKY CAPTAIN *and the* WORLD *of* TOMORROW

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IN THEATRES SEPTEMBER

selling game in Japan, but Capcom was the publisher. What gives?
David Burton
via e-mail

That's not a misprint; Capcom is publishing *Vice City* in Japan. This happens a lot between different territories, actually. It tends to be a matter of whether the publisher has a significant presence in the new market or not.

ONE GOOD TURN

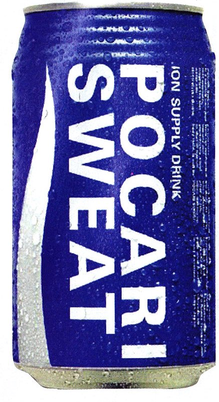
Last month you asked why *DRIV3R* would include the Timmy Vermicellis minigame if they wanted to separate themselves from the *GTA* franchise. I can tell you why, and the answer is *Grand Theft Auto III*. If you recall, you get a mission from Asuka to kill an undercover cop named Tanner who is "more or less useless out of his car." I think that would cause some sort of comeback by the *DRIV3R* guys, though I personally think *GTA*'s insult was better incorporated into the game.
Niall Presnall-Kelleher
via e-mail

Ah, touché. We'd forgotten about that. And we have to say we agree with you about it being done better in *GTA*.

SWEAT TO THE OLDIES

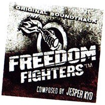
In recent issues you have mentioned something called Pocari Sweat. What is it?
Susan Halperin
via e-mail

It's an energy drink—sorry, "ion supply drink"—from Japan with a deliciously compelling name. As the official website says, "Water quality varies by country, but POCARI SWEAT is the same everywhere. Enjoy familiar POCARI SWEAT in the countries you visit!"



FREEDOM ROCK

Do you know who made the music for *Freedom Fighters*?
Sean
via e-mail



Yep.

Oh, you wanted us to *tell* you? The music was composed by Jesper Kyd, who also composed the scores for the *Hitman* and *Headhunter* series. You can own just about any of these on CD; just search for the games at www.music4games.net.

IMPORT-ANT QUESTION

In Issue 83 you stated that *Midnight Club 3* will have aftermarket parts and that *Dub* will be onboard helping with the game—but will there still be street racing with some import cars like Hondas and Nissans? It just wouldn't feel like *Midnight Club* without some imports.
DakuJeep@aol.com

We can't confirm yet which manufacturers or cars will be in the game, but yes, *Midnight Club 3* will definitely still have some imports. The idea is to add the pimped-out rides to the game while keeping the fundamentals of *Midnight Club* intact.

CULTURE SHOCK

On some demo discs, *OPM* adds a Japanese game demo. Can you put more Japanese demos on the disc?
B. Hays
via e-mail

Be careful what you wish for, buddy. We asked the Underground folks to hook us up with another exclusive Japanese demo to go along with *Space Fisherman* and *Chaindive*, and they dug up *Uoh* for this month's disc. It's a really interesting idea: You play a hapless fish who has to survive anglers' attempts on his life. Unfortunately, the game starts with a *really* long tutorial—entirely in Japanese—which left us scratching our heads. Maybe you'll have better luck figuring it out.

GOING UNDERGROUND

SEE IT, PLAY IT, LOVE IT ON THE DISC

SERIOUSLY SUICIDAL

Serious Sam is fun. Those little suicidal guys alone make the demo disc worth it. The special moves in *Ultimate Muscle* are cool, but just because you have cool special moves does not mean your game doesn't suck.
Death_Strikes
via the message board

CONTRALICIOUS

I liked pretty much all the demos. *Red Star* is a nice little 2D game, almost like *Contra*. I liked *Misson: Impossible* and *Serious Sam*. And *Galactic Wrestling* is hot.
gorillazfan2491
via the message board

BLOG OF THE MONTH

"One thing that really bothered me about *Parasite Eve* was the fact that a few wacky-looking animals somehow necessitated an evacuation of a city of 7 million people. That's only grown more unrealistic with time, especially as we've seen New York City fail to be evacuated when it was under attack by exploding *jetliners*. Quite the opposite, in fact; most people stood their ground and helped the unfortunate. And even if the mayor somehow decided that kicking everyone out of Manhattan was necessary after a single opera singer exploded at Carnegie Hall, the chances that the population of the city would meekly accept that mandate are laughable at best."
Jeremy Parish
toastyfrog.1up.com

CLUB OF THE MONTH

"This is the place for the few of us that use Macs. This is our refuge. Discuss any helpful applications, help each other out with Mac-related issues, talk about Mac gaming, just sit around and be better than PC users, etc."
Mac Users Club
macintosh.1up.com

ASK US ANYTHING!

SERIOUSLY, ANYTHING

REGAINING LOST YOUTH

Q. Back in the mid 1970s, there was a one-of-a-kind arcade game in a local arcade. It was a physically big game, with a projection screen that showed real footage of WWII planes zipping by and a big antiaircraft gun, with recoil, that you shot at them with. I am entertaining the idea of purchasing one for my home. Can you point me in the right direction as to where to look for one? Even the name of the game would be a start.
Forrest H.
via e-mail

A. Do the words *Battle Shark* mean anything to you?

IMAGINARY FRIEND

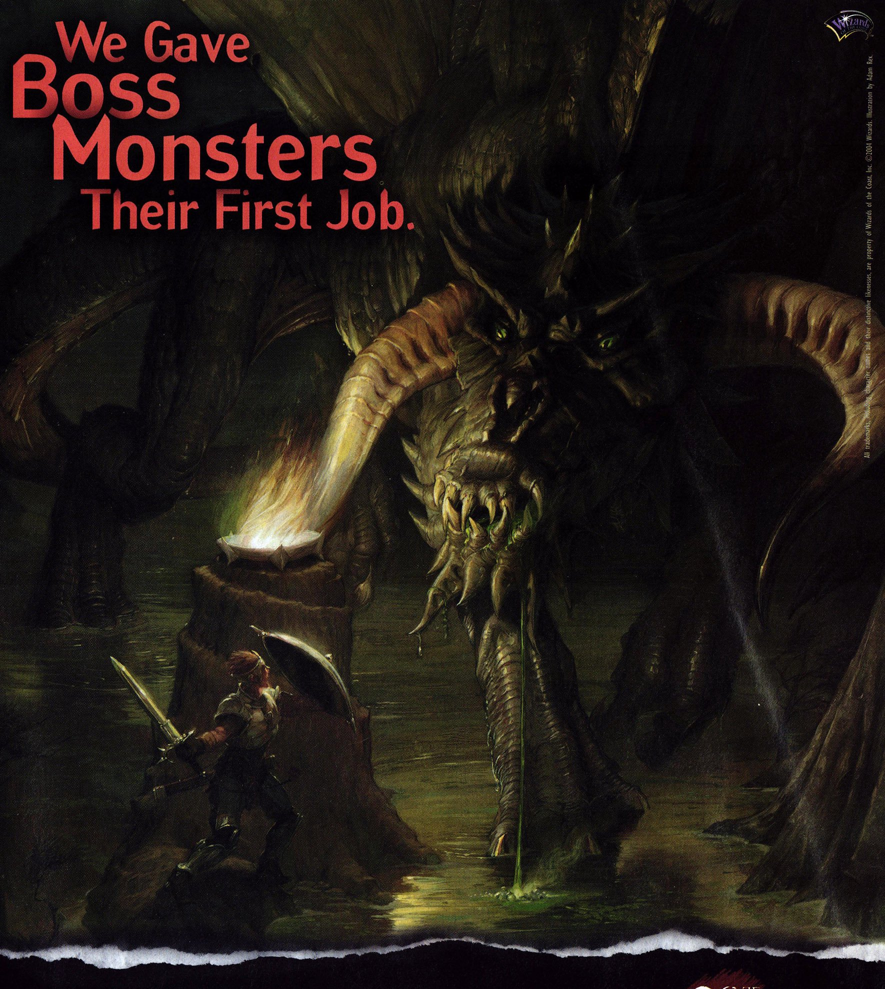
Q. Who was that on the cover of the June 2004 issue? Was she real or CG? She's a mega-hottie!
Dennis Beebe
via e-mail

A. She is 100 percent artificial.

CONNECT AND CONQUER

Q. In Issue 83, in the "Get Connected" section on page 109, it said that if you wanted your PC and PS2 plugged up at the same time all you needed was the cable/DSL router. Does this mean that you can be watching satellite TV while playing online PS2 games?
Zach Ulibarri
via e-mail

A. Sure, but most satellite companies do not provide broadband access, so it's sort of a moot point. But yes, if you had standard cable TV, you would be able to watch TV and play online simultaneously.



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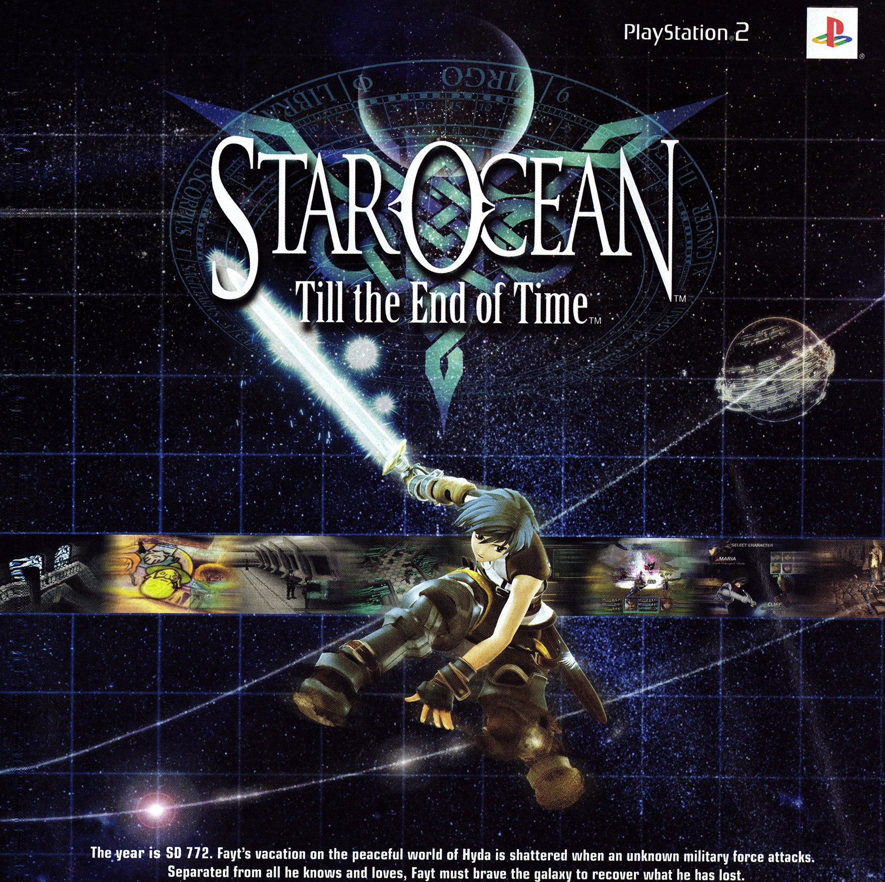

The year is SD 772. Fayt's vacation on the peaceful world of Hyda is shattered when an unknown military force attacks. Separated from all he knows and loves, Fayt must brave the galaxy to recover what he has lost.

TEEN
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CONTENT RATED BY
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Blood
Violence

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PRO LOGIC II

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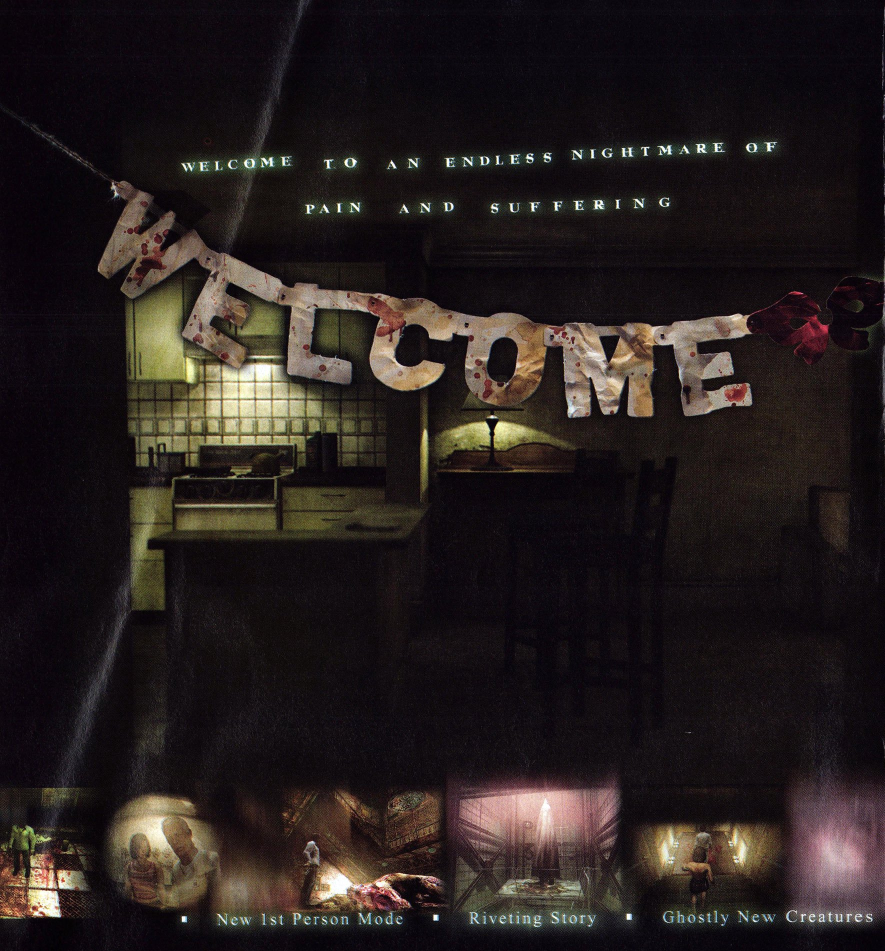
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HYPE

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Your ultimate destination for leisure and sport.

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Have rocket boots, will travel.

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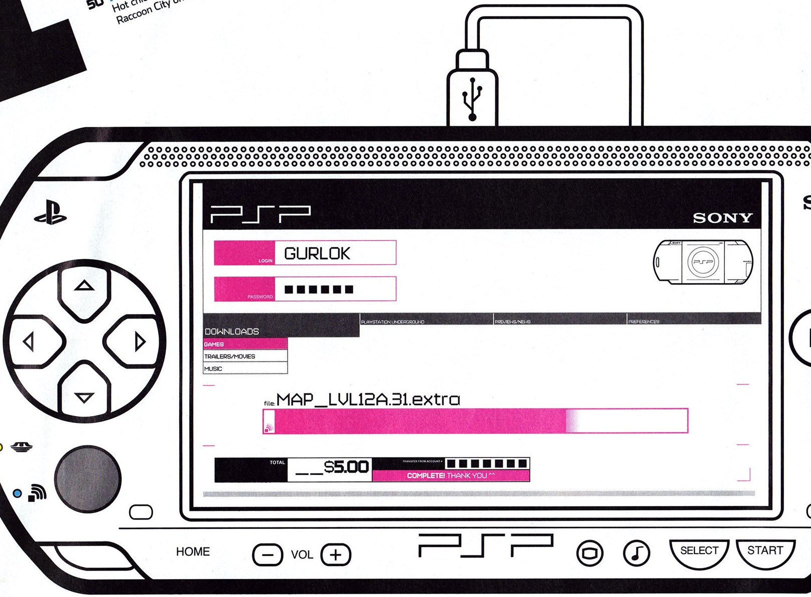
The page that counts.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COMPLETE! THANK YOU ^^
HOME
VOL
PSP
SELECT
START

PAY TO PLAY

HOW MUCH IS ONLINE GAMING WORTH TO YOU?

Sony CEA's online strategy has worked. There were 38 online-enabled PS2 games in 2003, and there will be 52 by the end of 2004. Gamers have spent a collective 47 million hours and counting playing *SOCOM II* online, and the 64 percent of PlayStation 2 users who have yet to participate in online gaming plan to do so within the immediate future. But no matter how many stats the company throws out or how many games support online play, there's still a problem—Sony's online service is not like Xbox Live, and that puts Sony at a great disadvantage.

At least from a money standpoint, it does. Not only does Microsoft earn revenue from the basic Xbox Live subscription fee, but downloadable content also provides an opportunity to make a little extra cash. Meanwhile, the PS2 hard drive lies dormant, waiting for new levels, cars, and other sorts of goodies that can help extend a game's longevity and expand a publisher's wallet.

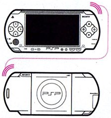
SONY'S ONLINE SERVICE IS NOT LIKE XBOX LIVE.

Sony isn't completely in the dark about this. The company knows it needs a better infrastructure in place to take advantage of these things. Andrew House, executive vice president of Sony CEA, has talked briefly about the company's plans to combat Xbox Live with stronger support for matchmaking, tournaments, and clans, as well as the addition of a single logon that can be used for all PS2 games. This single logon can then be used as a means for billing what Sony CEA calls "mini transactions," which basically amounts to paying for downloadable content—whether it's episodic, part of a persistent world, or even user-created items—but in small chunks.

These types of downloads may not only benefit publishers monetarily but also game creation itself. "It can definitely be a way to reduce risk for publishers. Let's start by building something small; if they buy it, we'll build more, shorter, cheaper games, but you could buy more of them," says Olivier Dauba, producer for *Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow*. "Gamers might be more likely to try out something for a few bucks online and then buy more if they like it. Pay as you play is a nicer way to think about it."

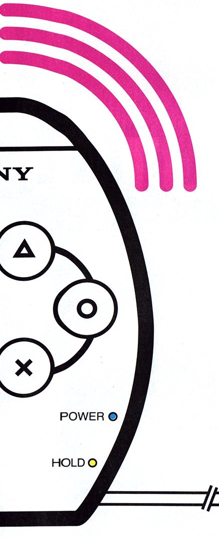
From another standpoint, mini transactions can also present new challenges. "If you are trying to design a game around a billing methodology, then I think you are in trouble," says Rod Humble, vice president of development at Sony Online Entertainment. "If it fits in well with the title, then yes, it can work. But you have to design the game with that billing methodology in mind. No billing method is going to be the difference between success and failure. The burden is squarely on game design. So if you have a great game design which incidentally requires small payments for downloads, then it could work, [but] the game design must come first."

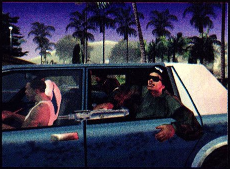
Of course, it all begs a bigger question: Should Sony CEA even bother to integrate these features into the PS2 at this point? With the system nearing the end of its primary life cycle, as well as the forthcoming release of the PSP and the unveiling of the next PlayStation at E3 2005, it'd seem wiser at this point for the company to wait for new hardware to arrive. Plus, it keeps in line with Sony CEA's previous strategy of marrying hardware with a killer application—in this case, a brand-new online service. In fact, the PSP seems to be at the center of much of this, since it has the abilities to download different media via memory sticks, connect with the PS2, and connect wirelessly to a network. It offers so many more avenues for a new online service that the PS2 simply can't provide because of its aging technology. Even if Sony CEA doesn't wait for the arrival of new hardware, the PSP will almost definitely become the focal point of its online strategy for years to come. «

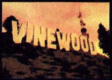


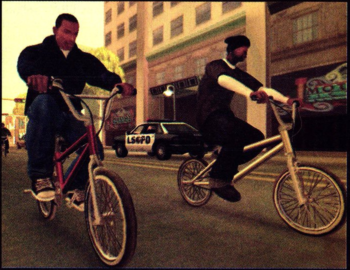
WI-FI CHALLENGE

At a recent news conference in Japan, Ken Kuturagi, president of Sony, said that up to 16 players can connect to each other wirelessly without using any sort of main connection hub. However, it's still not clear what you can do to play online games if there aren't 15 other PSP owners around.









GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS

THE SAN ANDREAS CHEAT SHEET—ALL THE NEWS WORTH KNOWING

THE CITIES

The state of San Andreas is home to three major cities, each one roughly the size of the entirety of Vice City. Each city will be more detailed than those in previous *GTA*s, with loads more interior environments.

1 LOS SANTOS: Loosely based on Los Angeles, this sprawling metropolis teems with gang warfare and movie deals, all taking place under an oppressive layer of yellowish smog.

2 SAN FIERRO: Based on San Francisco, this is a densely populated, seaside city. Its treacherous hills make getting around more of a challenge.

3 LAS VENTURAS: Based on Las Vegas, Las Venturas is a den of casinos, strip clubs, and organized crime set in the middle of an unforgiving desert.

1

2

3

THE COUNTRY

San Andreas' cities are separated by hundreds of virtual miles of countryside, totaling an area roughly twice the size of Vice City. The scenery varies widely, from lush pine forests to forbidding mountains to lonely deserts. Furthermore, sprinkled throughout the country are a double handful of small towns, each with its own unique character.

Even better: The only time you'll ever get a loading screen within the game is when going into buildings—the exterior setting of the entire state of San Andreas is one seamless location. If you wanted to, you could walk from Los Santos to Las Venturas at the other end of the state and never have a second of load time.

THE MAIN CHARACTER

The most interesting thing about Carl "CJ" Johnson isn't his gang-ridden background on the streets of Los Santos. It's his future: In a *GTA* first, CJ will now evolve over time. The more he uses a weapon, for example, the more proficient he becomes with that weapon. Similarly, if he runs a great deal, he becomes faster with better stamina. He can even build up his swimming skills (yes, *San Andreas* will finally allow you to swim out of vehicles that fall into water).

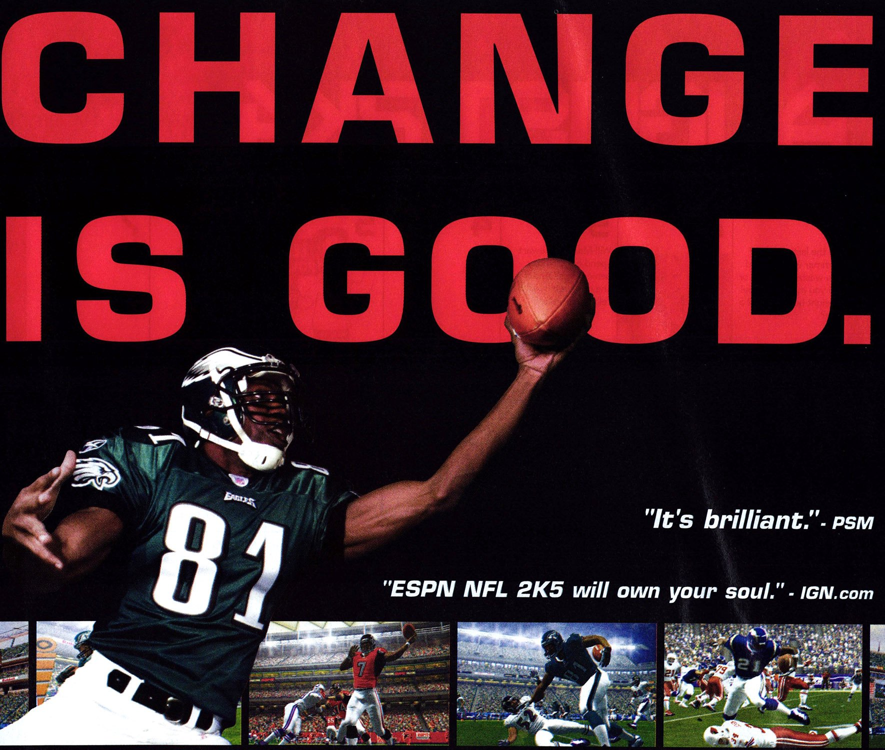
CJ's behavior doesn't only affect his skills but also his appearance. If he fails to get enough exercise, he'll get flabby, and if he consistently eats badly (eating is, after all, required to keep up his health), he'll get downright obese. Luckily, physical activity helps battle the bulge, making the new bicycle a dual-purpose vehicle.

THE SUPPORTING CAST

CJ begins the game surrounded by his old gang, the Orange Grove Families. These street toughs will accompany him on his early missions. Eventually, he'll be able to put his own gang together, occupying segments of Los Santos and bringing in a little extra cash on the side. Later, he'll be able to own property in other San Andreas cities, including a fully functional Las Venturas casino.

STREET FIGHTING

The *GTA* combat engine is getting a serious overhaul for *San Andreas*: Auto-targeting, for example, is now much more intelligent, targeting enemies and avoiding civilians. Hand-to-hand fighting is also improved with targeting, combos, and different stances. «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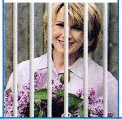
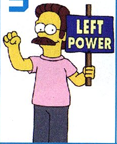
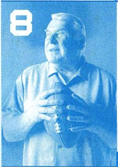
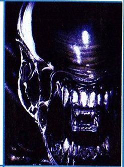
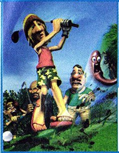
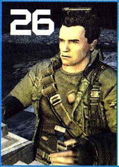
AUGUST 2K4

THE MONTH AHEAD FOR YOU AND YOUR PLAYSTATION 2

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 It's the last month of summer vacation. Did you waste it outside, or did you meet your goal of eight hours of PS2 a day?	2 	3 Will **Martha Stewart** spend her birthday behind bars? And if she does, what will her cellmate give her?	4	5  	6 ***Open Water*** (think ***Blair Witch*** meets ***Jaws***) opens in theaters today.	7
8 	9 Most publishers aren't releasing games today, as not to get trampled by ***Madden NFL 2005***. Working Designs is counterprogramming by shipping ***Growlanser: Generations***. [NEW GAMES]	10 ***ESPN NFL 2K5*** is out. It is marked down straight out of the gate to $19.99. It's a decent alternative to *Madden* if you're a little short on cash.	11 It's **National Presidential Joke Day.** See picturesofbush.1UP.com for some of the above funny business.	12 Tomorrow is **Left-Handed Day.** Go out and buy your crazy backward friend something from the Leftorium.	13 August. The end of the summer movie season. When film companies toss crap like ***Alien vs. Predator*** and ***Yu-Gi-Oh!*** at the screen, hoping to recoup the cost of making such trash.	
15	 [NEW GAMES]	17 ***Hot Shots Golf Fore!***, ***Ghosthunter***, ***The Guy Game***, ***Astro Boy***, and ***Armored Core: Nexus*** are all scheduled to come out today. Check www.1UP.com before you buy any of them.	18	19	20	21 If the names **Steve Cartwright** and **David Crane** make you pause in reverence, then head to the **Classic Gaming Expo** this weekend. Go to www.cgexpo.com for info or to see who those guys are.
22 Back in the day, the *OPM* office had a ***Hydro Thunder*** arcade machine that ran 24/7. This week, that game and ***Rush 2049*** are packaged together for the bargain price of $19.99.	23	24 Funnymen **Dave Chappelle, Craig Kilborn,** and **Steve Guttenberg** were born today. OK, funny is relative. 	25 There may not be a hockey season, but ***NHL 2005*** will be out this week, along with ***Terminator 3: The Redemption*** and ***ShellShock: Nam '67***. [NEW GAMES]	26 	27 ***Anacondas: The Hunt for the Blood Orchid*** opens and closes this weekend. At least the first one had J.Lo and Ice Cube. This one stars someone named Nicholas Hope.	28 It's **Race Your Mouse Day.** What kind of mouse?
29 ***2004 MTV Video Music Awards.*** Seems like forever ago that Madonna and Britney kissed at last year's *VMAs*. It was all over the TV until a certain boob popped out at the Super Bowl in Feb.	30 Cryogenically frozen-in-time baseball great **Ted Williams** turns 86. Wouldn't it be cool if they figured out how to unthaw these fools that did this to themselves? Then Walt Disney would kick Eisner's ass.	31 ***Street Racing Syndicate*** revs into stores. If you'd rather virtually kill some animals, ***Rapala Pro Fishing*** and ***Cabela's Deer Hunt 2005 Season*** come out. [NEW GAMES]	 		*OPM* staffers **Bob C.** (August 10), **Scooter** (August 15), and **Tina H.** (August 26) have August birthdays. Looks like John is going to be springing for a lot of free lunches. Wish them well on their 1UP.com pages.	

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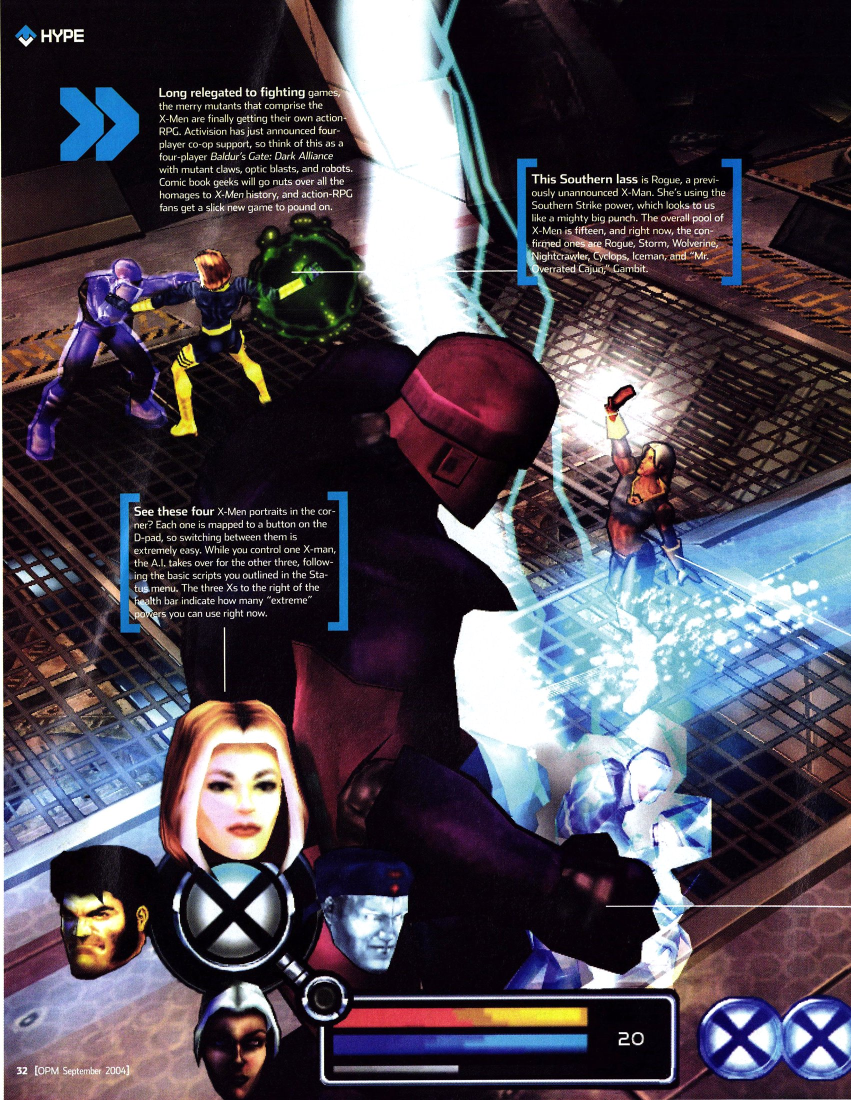


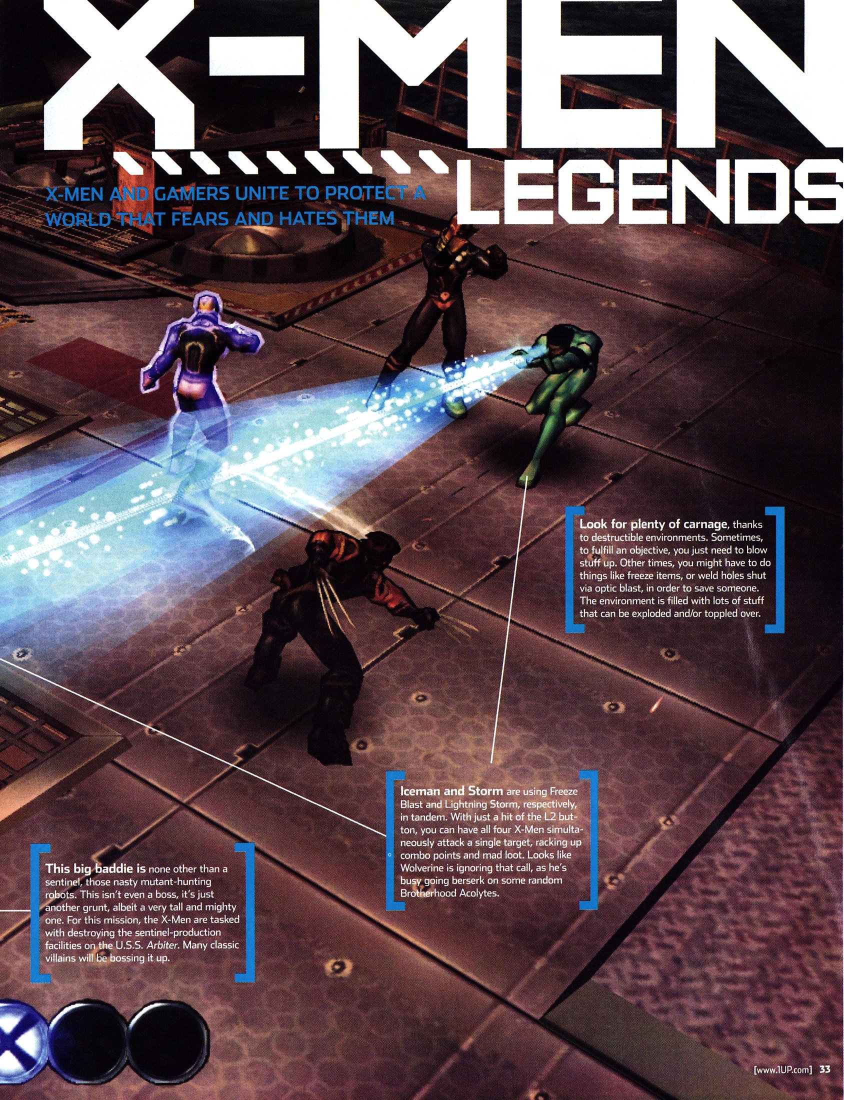
Long relegated to fighting games, the merry mutants that comprise the X-Men are finally getting their own action-RPG. Activision has just announced four-player co-op support, so think of this as a four-player *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance* with mutant claws, optic blasts, and robots. Comic book geeks will go nuts over all the homages to *X-Men* history, and action-RPG fans get a slick new game to pound on.

This Southern lass is Rogue, a previously unannounced X-Man. She's using the Southern Strike power, which looks to us like a mighty big punch. The overall pool of X-Men is fifteen, and right now, the confirmed ones are Rogue, Storm, Wolverine, Nightcrawler, Cyclops, Iceman, and "Mr. Overrated Cajun," Gambit.

See these four X-Men portraits in the corner? Each one is mapped to a button on the D-pad, so switching between them is extremely easy. While you control one X-man, the A.I. takes over for the other three, following the basic scripts you outlined in the Status menu. The three Xs to the right of the health bar indicate how many "extreme" powers you can use right now.

X-MEN LEGENDS

X-MEN AND GAMERS UNITE TO PROTECT A WORLD THAT FEARS AND HATES THEM



Look for plenty of carnage, thanks to destructible environments. Sometimes, to fulfill an objective, you just need to blow stuff up. Other times, you might have to do things like freeze items, or weld holes shut via optic blast, in order to save someone. The environment is filled with lots of stuff that can be exploded and/or toppled over.

Iceman and Storm are using Freeze Blast and Lightning Storm, respectively, in tandem. With just a hit of the L2 button, you can have all four X-Men simultaneously attack a single target, racking up combo points and mad loot. Looks like Wolverine is ignoring that call, as he's busy going berserk on some random Brotherhood Acolytes.

This big baddie is none other than a sentinel, those nasty mutant-hunting robots. This isn't even a boss, it's just another grunt, albeit a very tall and mighty one. For this mission, the X-Men are tasked with destroying the sentinel-production facilities on the U.S.S. *Arbiter*. Many classic villains will be bossing it up.

GHOST BUSTED

BLIZZARD HIJACKS STARCRAFT: GHOST DEVELOPMENT

We should've seen it coming. While showing off *StarCraft: Ghost* at last year's Tokyo Game Show, members of the team at Nihilistic commented that they weren't entirely sure of the game's direction in terms of the balance of stealth- and action-oriented gameplay. Plus, the team was still figuring out how to truly make it feel as though players were a part of an epic interplanetary battle similar to those that take place in the *StarCraft* real-time-strategy game.

Well, it seems as though that uncertainty may have been what caused Blizzard to ultimately take *Ghost* away from Nihilistic. Both parties are tight-lipped about the details of the breakup, but Blizzard did offer a general comment stating, "Nihilistic has finished its contribution," and that Blizzard looks forward to building on the preexisting aspects of the game.

THAT UNCERTAINTY MAY HAVE CAUSED BLIZZARD TO TAKE AWAY *GHOST*.

But Blizzard still isn't handling the game's development internally—it's far too busy with *World of WarCraft* and other projects. Instead, the company has handed the new development duties over to Swingin' Ape Studios, the minds behind the surprisingly entertaining *Metal Arms: Glitch in the System*. "The team at Swingin' Ape Studios is a very talented group," says Mike Morhaime, president and cofounder of Blizzard. "We're confident that this partnership will result in titles that achieve the level of quality that players have come to expect from Blizzard products."

Sadly for gamers, this also means *Ghost* has been delayed yet again, making it unlikely the game will arrive in stores by late 2004. «

DATA STREAM

NO PSP DELAY

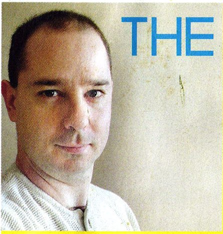
Despite initial reports to the contrary, Sony says the PSP is still on track for release in Japan before the end of the year and that the North American release hasn't changed from the original March target. However, there are growing concerns that the amount of software for both launches will be quite limited despite the growing support for the system.

THAT'S RIDDICKULOUS

If you've been waiting for *The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape From Butcher Bay* to show up on PS2, you're gonna have to wait a little longer. Vivendi Universal has gone on record saying that the Xbox game based on Vin Diesel's character from the movies *Pitch Black* and *The Chronicles of Riddick* will remain exclusive to the Xbox and PC—at least for now. But take comfort in knowing that some of the game's special effects wouldn't look quite as good on PS2.

THE WATCHDOG

SILLY MOVIE STUDIO! REVIEWS ARE FOR GAMERS!



JOHN SCALZI is our man keeping an eye on things for the benefit of all gamers. You can see more of his thoughts on www.scalzi.com.

Movie studio Warner Bros. is apparently getting tired of licensing its titles to videogame makers just to have the games suck—yes, that's you, *Enter the Matrix*—so Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment Senior VP Jason Hall announced in May that the studio would require game makers to pay Warner Bros. extra royalties if the games made from its movies stank. How to know? The studio would look at the aggregate review scores of the game from various media. If the score was below 70 percent, penalties would kick in. "The bad games are over," Hall proclaimed.

Hall is right about movie tie-in games often being rancid: poorly thought-out, badly coded, full of bugs, and no fun to play. They're bad enough that I think the general assumption is that if a game is based on a movie, it's going to bad. So if the licensor is putting its foot down and saying it will penalize for craptitude, good for them.

But this isn't the way. This idea is predicated on the notion that game reviews are something other than what they are—deeply subjective opinions that can be influenced by any number of factors, many of which have nothing to do with the game. What if the game's an FPS and the reviewer prefers RPGs? What if the reviewer hates the property it's based on? What if the reviewer just had a relationship fall apart and needs to take out his misery on something? And let's not forget: What if the reviewer is simply a moron? It does happen, you know.

GAME MAKERS WOULD PAY EXTRA ROYALTIES IF THE GAMES STANK.

Another reason to be wary of linking royalties to reviews: Let's say a game maker has paid a lot of money to buy a movie tie-in license and realizes close to the ship date that the game is on the bubble. Nothing wrong with it, but it's clearly not great. Let's say the royalty penalty would be the difference between the game maker making its quarterly estimates or not. If your company's well-being is on the line, is it worth it to you to influence the critic, who is, after all, only human (and also likely a geeky young male) and therefore has, ahem, "addressable needs"?

Alternately, what if there's a game critic out there who, in talking to a game maker's publicist, notes that his review could go either way and then casually notes he's had his eye on an iPod he can't quite afford? If you don't think either of these scenarios could happen, well, you need to get out more, friend. The top-tier critics (yes, like at *OPM*) likely wouldn't be targets or culprits for this crap—they've got journalism experience and dental (i.e., they have ethics and decent compensation). But this still leaves a lot of wiggle room for manipulation in the other tiers.

Game reviews are meant for consumers, not game makers or game licensors. I applaud WB for wanting games based on its movies to be better—I want them to be better, too. But factoring reviews into royalties will just increase pressure on game makers to influence reviews—it's cheaper and easier than fixing games. The end result: The bad games wouldn't be over. You just couldn't trust the media to tell you about them. «

PORTABLE GEAR

HIDEO KOJIMA LIKES FAST FOOD AND PORTABLE GAMING

When it comes to coaxing the best performance out of new hardware, few creators are as demanding as Konami's Hideo Kojima, creator of the *Metal Gear Solid* games. While other designers were still complaining about the difficulties of programming for PlayStation 2, Kojima's team set the gaming world on its ear with *Metal Gear Solid 2*. Small wonder that Sony CEA put *Metal Gear Acid*, already one of the most technically impressive PSP games, front and center at the unveiling of the handheld.

OPM What do you look for in portable game systems?

HIDEO KOJIMA If [I am] restricted to games only, I want to see [new] areas explored with portable game systems that cannot be explored with home consoles. Portable systems should not be smaller versions of home consoles that you carry around.

> **"PSP IS MORE OF A FASHION TOOL THAN A TOY OR GAME CONSOLE."**

The games you play on portable systems should take advantage of the fact that they can be carried around, leading to new forms of gameplay. For example, with the *Boktai* series, changes in the environment [such as sunlight or the lack thereof] affect the gameplay.

Portable games should not be like a regular meal carried around in a fast-food dish. It's more of a dish that you can enjoy only because of the fact that it is takeout food. That's the kind of [experience] I expect portable game systems to provide.

OPM What do you like about PSP?

HK It's more of a fashion tool with pop [style] and laid-back positioning than a toy or game console. It's a Walkman that allows you to enjoy video, music, and games.

During my generation, the Walkman was a musical revolution. It enabled us to take music outdoors and pursue our own musical tastes. [Sony has now added] visuals to that experience. "Is it a game console?" is a question that does not have to be asked. You don't necessarily have to play games on the PSP. You don't have to watch videos, either. You don't have to listen to music. Let the consumer choose between videos, music, and games. Let the consumer choose whether he or she feels like watching movies, listening to music, or playing games every day. I think the balance among the three media will differ from consumer to consumer.

OPM As a game creator, why does PSP interest you?

HK I am more interested in the PSP as a consumer than a gamemaker. It's something I would like to carry around. Personally, if I carried around a PSP, videogames would be lower on my priority list.

As a game creator, what interests me is a system that makes me ask myself, "What kinds of new games can I create?" The [Nintendo] DS offers that challenge.

The PSP makes me want to buy it as a consumer. «

A CALAMITY FOR ACCLAIM

KICK 'EM WHILE THEY'RE DOWN

Just when you thought things couldn't get worse for Acclaim, they do. In its quarterly statement, the company reported a loss of $25.4 million, which, in combination with a financing agreement that expires in August, may push the company to apply for bankruptcy protection, though Acclaim...err, claims it has another agreement in place to borrow $30 million.

On top of all that, both the *Turok* and *Major League Baseball* licenses have been stripped from Acclaim because of the company's alleged inability to pay royalties for them. While the *Turok* license has lost its luster since the release of the Nintendo 64 game, losing the *MLB* license would be a particularly strong blow since it's one of the few properties that performs relatively well at retail for the company. But it may not end up losing either license—Acclaim contends that royalties have been paid for both, and the company will fight to retain them in court.

That's not all. Battleborne Entertainment, the developer behind *Combat Elite: WWII Paratroopers,* has filed a preliminary injunction against Acclaim preventing the release of the game. Battleborne claims that Acclaim has failed to make scheduled payments and that Acclaim threatened to release the game before making payments. It's a gigantic mess, but Acclaim always seems to get out of these situations by the skin of its teeth. «

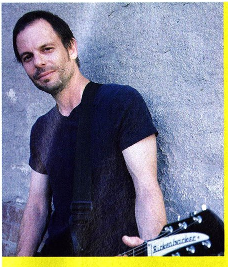
ON THE LOOSE
Turok's raptors have escaped from the Acclaim enclosure, but there's a chance they may be recaptured or even find a new home.

HARD CELL

TIME FOR TECH DOMINATION

Sony has big plans for Cell technology—plans that go way beyond PlayStation 3 but function as a part of the company's strategy to take over your entire living room. When Cell processors are ready to go into mass production (most likely sometime in 2005), Sony will produce televisions based on the technology, which presumably allows these sets to connect to the Internet for the purpose of receiving program guides and schedules—essentially functioning like TiVo when used in combination with other Cell-based products. The first Cell-powered televisions are expected to hit the market in 2006, preceding the launch of Sony's next console.

Much of this strategy of conquering households across the United States and the world comes in direct response to technology giant Microsoft, which has made substantial steps toward integrating the PC into all facets of home entertainment and will continue to do so with the release of its next console. «



THE OUTSIDER

A FOOL AND HIS MONEY ARE SOON PARTED

ROBIN WILSON
is the lead singer for the Gin Blossoms when he's not bartering with the EB clerk who buys back games.

»

I'm too trusting. I take a lot on faith—for example, that all the games I buy are going to be worth the money.

One thing I take for granted is that experienced developers are pushing to the edge of what the PS2 hardware is capable of. However, it seems that only a few developers are finally delivering what we were promised from PS2 hardware, and hardly anybody has even bothered to tinker with peripherals like the hard drive or EyeToy yet. Now that PS3 is probably only a couple years away, it's likely that developer resources will be sucked up by the new system's launch titles and the PS2 will never reach its full potential. And as the cycle begins again, I wonder if the remaining years of PS2 and the first year of PS3 might be semimediocre.

I also tend to assume that sequels are going to be improvements over their predecessors and that cross-platform titles won't suck when jammed into the PS2's smaller brain. And that's a perfectly fair assumption—I should be able to take it for granted that PS2 games will constantly improve, and that when a sequel takes two years and $10 million to develop, it's going to be worth the time and money of a dedicated fan.

Such is not the case with the PS2 version of *Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne*. The first hour of this hawker is about as fun as cleaning ashtrays. That is unless you like sitting through endless load screens while getting fleeced for 50 bucks. What bothered me most about *Max Payne 2* was a seeming lack of craftsmanship and polish. For example, when Max bends over, his coattails stick out horizontally like a stiff board. At this stage of the PS2's life span, this lack of polish is unacceptable. The whole thing reminded me of playing *Quake* on the Nintendo 64. I guess it was just the general crappiness of it all.

My naive faith has burned me for the last time, and from now on, I'm not buying any new games until I've played a demo or rented them first.

As for *Max Payne 2,* my copy will end up in the used-game bin next to *Sky Odyssey* and *Fantavision*—and I'll be lucky to get back a third of what I paid. Then someone's going to come along and buy it, because he'll make the same assumptions I did. Poor sap. «

WILL THE REMAINING YEARS OF PS2 AND THE FIRST YEAR OF PS3 BE SEMIMEDIOCRE?

TATES
ENTA CAMPE
3

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PlayStation 2

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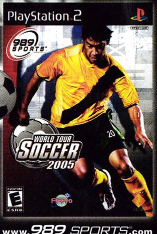
PLAY IN OURS.



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METAL GEAR
METAL GEAR
Area51
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Area51
METAL GEAR SOLID
Virtua Fighter
Virtua Fighter
CONTRA
TRA
PS2
SONY
Virtua Fighter
Virtua Fighter
GoldenEye
Metal Gear
Metal Gear
Metal Gear
NARC
NARC
GoldenEye
Virtua Fighter

Illustration by 123klan.com

FRANCHISE REMIX

OLD DOGS, NEW TRICKS

SECOND SUMMARY

The franchise-remix phenomenon explained through five pithy quotes. (You'll have to read the whole piece yourself to find out who said what.)

"In the last couple of years, there were 110 new intellectual properties launched. Only five went on to sell more than 500,000 copies."

"I don't think people necessarily want something new. Known brands provide customers comfort and trust."

"Franchises are not the unique key to success. Franchises are worth it only if you try hard to make each sequel unique by providing new emotions, new gameplay, and new challenges."

"The road to hell is paved with examples of people pushing a franchise too far."

"There are plenty of games waiting in the cupboards. If you are a very creative team, you may find the recipe to bring them back to life."

Just about every other game released these days seems to be a sequel. Some call it a curse of unimaginative thinking; others say it's the natural order of things and ought not be questioned. But we've noticed a new wind that's blown this trend in a slightly different direction.

Lately, more and more game designers are taking respected franchises—their own or someone else's—and giving them face-lifts. In some cases, this is little more than a slight retooling; in others, it's a drastic redesign that leads to a game that shares only minor elements with its nominal predecessors. But it's almost always an interesting take on a familiar franchise.

Where is this trend coming from? In part, it's due to the hit-driven market that makes publishers wary of investing in entirely new properties. "In the last couple of years, there were 110 new intellectual properties launched [in the game market]," says Steve Allison, chief marketing officer for Midway. "Of those 110, only five went on to sell more than 500,000 copies. This is a daunting statistic. Games cost about $10 million, on average, to produce, and failure to sell more than 500,000 units is very painful versus these economics. It's important for companies to keep testing new properties, but it's suicide if it's the sole component of their business plan. So I think it is smart, when applicable, for all of us to apply known brands that help make an instant connection for consumers."

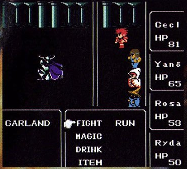
FINAL FANTASY XII

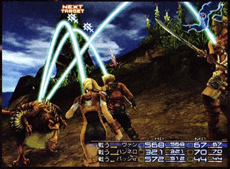
Final Fantasy games have been quite different from one another throughout the years, but one thing has stayed constant: random battles. From finding one tiny strip of peninsula in *FFI*, which would have you fight ogres again and again, to randomly encountering fools in *FFX-2*, the random battle has been a steady constant for the franchise.

So, the craziest change that *FFXII* has brought to the table so far? No more random battles. Exploration smoothly segues into combat. Even the recent *Star Ocean*, which lets you see enemies on the field before engaging them, still had the "screen blurs or shatters as the combat map is loaded up" presentation. In *FFXII*, you see an enemy and can then walk up to it and issue orders to attack, with no weird effects or load screens interrupting you.

Combat works as follows: Locate an enemy. Bring up a character menu and issue an attack command; you'll see a blue line going from your character to his or her target (a red line indicates who the enemy is targeting). You can issue a simple All Attack command, which tells everyone to simply hit the enemy, or fine-tune your combat by issuing different orders. Range, terrain, height, and weapons are all factored in figuring out how well the characters attack; once given a command, they do that command repeatedly until told otherwise. Also, the whole time this is happening, you can either issue commands in real time or have the battle paused when you do so.

The overhauled combat is a huge step for the *FF* franchise, and we can't wait to see what else *FFXII* shakes up.




NEXT TARGET
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Pub. Square Enix **Dev.** Square Enix **Release** Early 2005

Yozo Sakagami, producer of Namco's *Tekken* spin-off *Death by Degrees*, has a similar approach: "We ask ourselves, 'What do we have to do to have a customer play an innovative game in this market?' One way is to take a classic franchise in a new, different direction and add innovative gaming features and components. Adding innovative features to a game that already has mass appeal allows the customer to accept and embrace the new game."

The concern with this approach is that it has the potential to stifle creativity: If game designers turn more and more to the safe path, how does the gaming medium advance as an art form? Sakagami's answer is that it doesn't—and apparently, it shouldn't. "I don't think people necessarily want something new," he tells us. "Games are entertainment, just like movies and TV shows, and known brands and franchise titles and characters provide customers with comfort and trust."

Neil Young, general manager of EA's Maxis studio—currently working on revamping the best-selling game of all time with *The Urbz: Sims in the City*—fervently disagrees. "Ultimately, if we want to keep our medium fresh, we need to invent," he says. "We're so early in the life cycle of games as an entertainment medium, it's really far too early to give up on this in favor of safety."

Nobuya Nakazato, producer of Konami's *Neo Contra*, expresses a similar sentiment. "The recent trend in the game industry to develop more mainstream titles [means that] developers go to great lengths to secure new audiences by creating very 'light' games," he says. "Detailed 'heavy' games that appeal to the hardcore gamers are made less [frequently]. But without the support of these hardcore gamers, there is no bright future for our industry."

The trouble is, while the hardcore gamers may drive innovation, sales numbers tend to indicate that they don't drive sales. Could Sakagami be right about gamers wanting nothing but "comfort and trust"? Brian Fargo, CEO of InXile Entertainment, whose *Bard's Tale* presents a seriously different interpretation of a venerable PC RPG franchise, hopes not. "Obviously, it's frustrating to see a lousy game with a big license outsell something that is really innovative," he says, "but that is the reality of selling to the mass consumer. We can only hope that consumers will recognize something fresh and that word will spread and we will continue to help push the industry."

> **"IF WE WANT TO KEEP OUR MEDIUM FRESH, WE NEED TO INVENT."**

It seems to us that there should be a happy medium between the art and the monetary bottom line. Midway's Allison agrees, saying, "There's no reason a game can't be an original, creative, AAA-quality game but still contain elements that make it relevant to a large audience."

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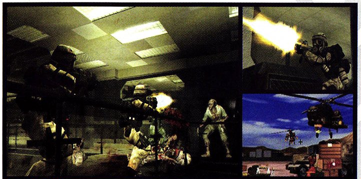
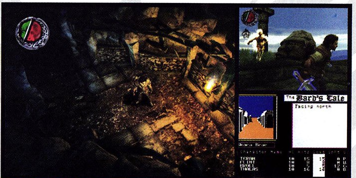


AREA 51

Nine years ago, the original *Area 51* was a light-gun game with digitized graphics and moving scenery, unlike other light-gun games, which had fixed viewpoints. Shortly after, Midway ported the game to PS1.

Now, for the PS2 generation, we get an FPS decked out with all sorts of graphical goodness. Those digitized graphics are a far cry from the detailed texture maps that adorn both the characters and the rooms they're in. Since it's an FPS, you're no longer relegated to being locked to a STARR agent's path. While the light-gun version had you shooting aliens and zombies as part of the STARR team, the new update puts you in a hazmat team sent in to clean up Area 51. Also, you have to deal not only with aliens and fellow hazmat/special forces troops, but also with your own mutant powers, since you get bitten by the alien hybrids at one point and gain mutant powers. The developers kept the basic concept of "shoot aliens in Area 51" the same, but they've expanded it into a solid-looking shooter.

Pub. Midway **Dev.** Inevitable **Release** October

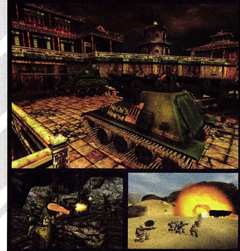


THE BARD'S TALE

The original *Bard's Tale,* published way back in 1987 by Electronic Arts, is considered one of the games that shaped the future of the modern RPG. Aside from its genre-defining gameplay, it was notable for its sense of humor, color graphics, and monsters, which were actually animated.

The new game is produced by Brian Fargo, the man behind the original. Like the version released 17 years ago, Fargo's new creation will also feature color graphics and animated monsters, thanks to the technical trickery of Snowblind's familiar *Champions of Norrath* engine. Humor also plays a big part, with the script consciously mocking just about every RPG convention you can think of. The star of the game is the definition of "reluctant hero" and would seem to be far more interested in hoarding cash and ogling boobs than he is in performing anything remotely noble. After playing the first dungeon ourselves, we're happy to report that the result is something very rare on PS2: a game that's *actually funny.*

Pub. InXile Entertainment **Dev.** InXile Entertainment **Release** November

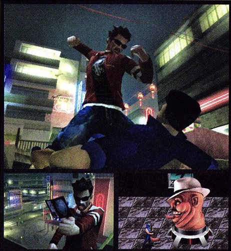


CONFLICT: VIETNAM

The first two *Conflict* games were pretty light on story and took place in the modern days, when our troops spent a lot of time over in Baghdad. They were decent squad-based shooters loaded with brown textures mapped over random hills. But decent doesn't really cut it when you have titles like *SOCOM* around to demonstrate how squad-based tactical shooters should be done.

Conflict: Vietnam does a total 180 on the series by putting it 30 years in the past and in a different set of terrain altogether. The game is set in the jungles of Vietnam (along with a whole lot of other upcoming action games); plus, it has an actual story this time. Rather than take nigh-anonymous soldiers through loosely connected missions, you take part in an actual story that spans four days in the Vietnam War. Adding to the story component are the RPG elements, which let you assign points to your soldiers' skills at the end of every mission. *Vietnam* both refines and expands the core *Conflict* franchise.

Pub. Gathering **Dev.** SCi **Release** Fall

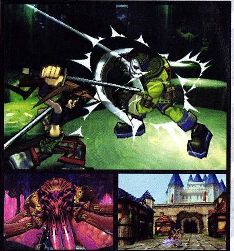


NARC

Playing *NARC* in the arcade was kind of like living out the Punisher's fantasies. Armed with body armor, a submachine gun, and a rocket launcher that was certainly not standard issue, players guided digital DEA agents as they cleaned up the streets. It was so prototypically violent, absurd, and mindless that it had a minor guest role in *Terminator 2* of all places and featured a boss fight with a huge head.

This new incarnation is a loose adaptation of the arcade original, since you're still playing as Hitman or Max Force while trying to take down Mr. Big. The biggest controversy is the whole "drug taking" aspect, which lets you actually take drugs for short-term boosts—except doing so will screw with your health and police rating. Gameplaywise, *NARC* is no longer a straightforward shooter; you actually get called on specific missions via a police radio. In between missions, the game is a bit free-form, as you can roam the streets and partake in the war on drugs.

Pub. Midway **Dev.** Vis **Release** February 2005



SAMURAI MUSASHI LEGENDS

Imagine if Link from *The Legend of Zelda* were a spiky blue-haired anime kid, and you loosely have what became *Brave Fencer Musashi.* While this was a fun little action-RPG in its own right, people tend to remember it more for being packaged with the *Final Fantasy VIII* demo (much as how *Zone of the Enders* was known as the game that the *MGS2* demo was bundled with).

So it's a bit surprising to see another *Musashi* game six years later. Since Musashi himself has been designed by Tetsuya Nomura this time, he looks a lot more belt-buckled and slicker than his original 1998 self. The new game is still an action-RPG, but with some quirky additions, such as a carrying system (Musashi literally hauls a princess or two away from danger) and the mikiri system, through which you steal moves from your enemies. Adding to its quirkiness is the "manga shader," Squenix's version of cel shading, which makes Musashi look all the more colorful and animated.

Pub. Square Enix **Dev.** Square Enix **Release** Winter 2004

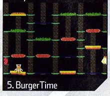
5 FAMOUS FRANCHISES WE'D LIKE TO SEE REMIXED

1. Jumping Flash

2. Tomb Raider

3. Monkey Island

4. Myst


5. BurgerTime

5 FAILED REMIXES

What happens when a designer doesn't get the franchise-resurrection formula quite right? This:

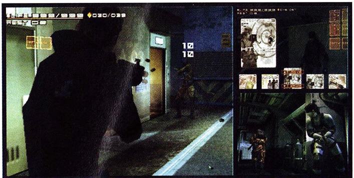
1. Pitfall 3D

2. Centipede

3. Mortal Kombat: Special Forces

4. Legacy of Kain: Defiance

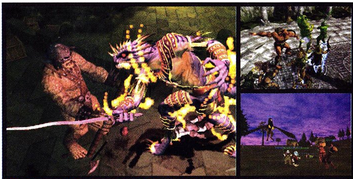
5. BMX XXX



METAL GEAR ACID

This is exciting, isn't it? We get to drop a PSP game into an otherwise PS2-dominated preview feature. Although not much has been revealed about *Acid* so far, we can tell you that it's not a remake of a previous *Metal Gear* (contrary to early *Twin Snakes*–style rumors), it's not really a sequel either, and it's not an action game. Kojima told us at E3 that he didn't feel the PSP was particularly suited to frenetic 3D gunplay, so he chose to produce something a little more sedate. The result is a turn-based strategy game that we shall henceforth lazily refer to as being "a bit like *Final Fantasy Tactics*." Obviously, on the surface, it's not really that much like *FFT*, seeing that it's all 3D and stuff, but underneath the gloss, you are essentially taking Snake (circa bandana and spiky hair) through a turn-based mission and making tactical mission choices rather than simply pulling out your FAMAS and popping caps in asses. As is the fashion in handheld games lately, there's also a card-based play dynamic, so it's a little bit *Yu-Gi-Oh!* for good measure.

Pub. Konami **Dev.** Konami **Release** March 2005

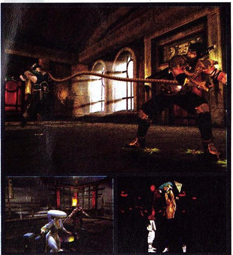


CHAMPIONS: RETURN TO ARMS

More than five years ago, *EverQuest* for the PC was introduced to the world and redefined the nature of massively multiplayer games. Last year, developer Snowblind took the *EverQuest* roots and transported them to a hack-n-slash setting with *Champions of Norrath*. Now, the sequel promises even more RPG goodness, thanks to the addition of some new features.

One new feature is player-versus-player battles, in which up to four players can duel it out for supremacy. Another mode pairs players together: Starting at level 1 with no weapons, armor, or potions, you see how long you can last against a series of monsters. Also new are minigames called "medal rounds." We got to play a medal round that charged us with safeguarding carts full of gunpowder from being blown up by packs of kobolds by throwing explosive potions at them, in order to keep more than two at a time from getting to any cart. The team hopes these options will offer quality play for people who may have only 10 or 15 minutes to spend with the game.

Pub. Sony Online Entertainment **Dev.** Snowblind Studios **Release** February 2005

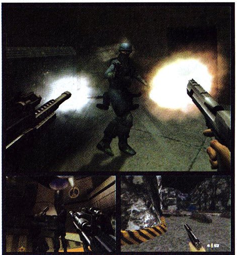


MORTAL KOMBAT: DECEPTION

Back in an age when arcades were still populated with human beings, *Mortal Kombat*'s digitized characters and generous amounts of gore drew plenty of crowds. But with each successive release, fewer people paid attention. With the release of *Mortal Kombat IV*, it looked like the end of the line for Scorpion, Sub-Zero, and the rest of the *MK* crew. Then came *Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance*, which reinvigorated the franchise with fluid mechanics and over-the-top *MK* violence.

The newest game, *Deception*, will improve upon many of the features introduced in *Deadly Alliance* and bring back some old favorites, such as level-specific fatalities and a revamped Konquest mode that offers more freedom than its previous incarnation. Plenty of brand-new features include Puzzle Kombat, the *Mortal Kombat* take on *Puzzle Fighter*, and a version of chess featuring the *MK* cast. These new options are almost like a special "thank you" from Midway to those who stuck with the series over the years.

Pub. Midway **Dev.** Midway **Release** October

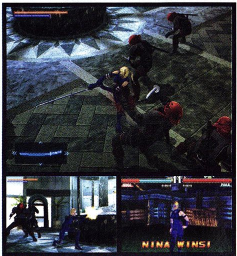


GOLDENEYE: ROGUE AGENT

We all know the original *GoldenEye* for the Nintendo 64 was a great first-person shooter—it's been said only about 8 bajillion times. But it was deserving of the praise. It offered a perfect mix of intense shootouts, puzzle solving, and some great multiplayer features.

It's a mystery that no one jumped on the idea sooner, but EA Games hopes that *GoldenEye: Rogue Agent*, the spiritual sequel to Rare's defining work, will be worth the wait. If anything, it offers a unique glimpse into the James Bond universe, giving you a chance to be an evildoer—with a cybernetic eye implant, no less (a...*golden*...eye). All of the environments in the game are faithfully re-created from various *Bond* movies, and the game includes a who's who of Bond villains, from Oddjob to Xenia Onatopp. Plus, top Hollywood talent is handling many of the visual aspects of the game. We can only hope both the multiplayer (one of the original's shining moments) and single player live up to the game's name.

Pub. EA Games **Dev.** EA LA **Release** November

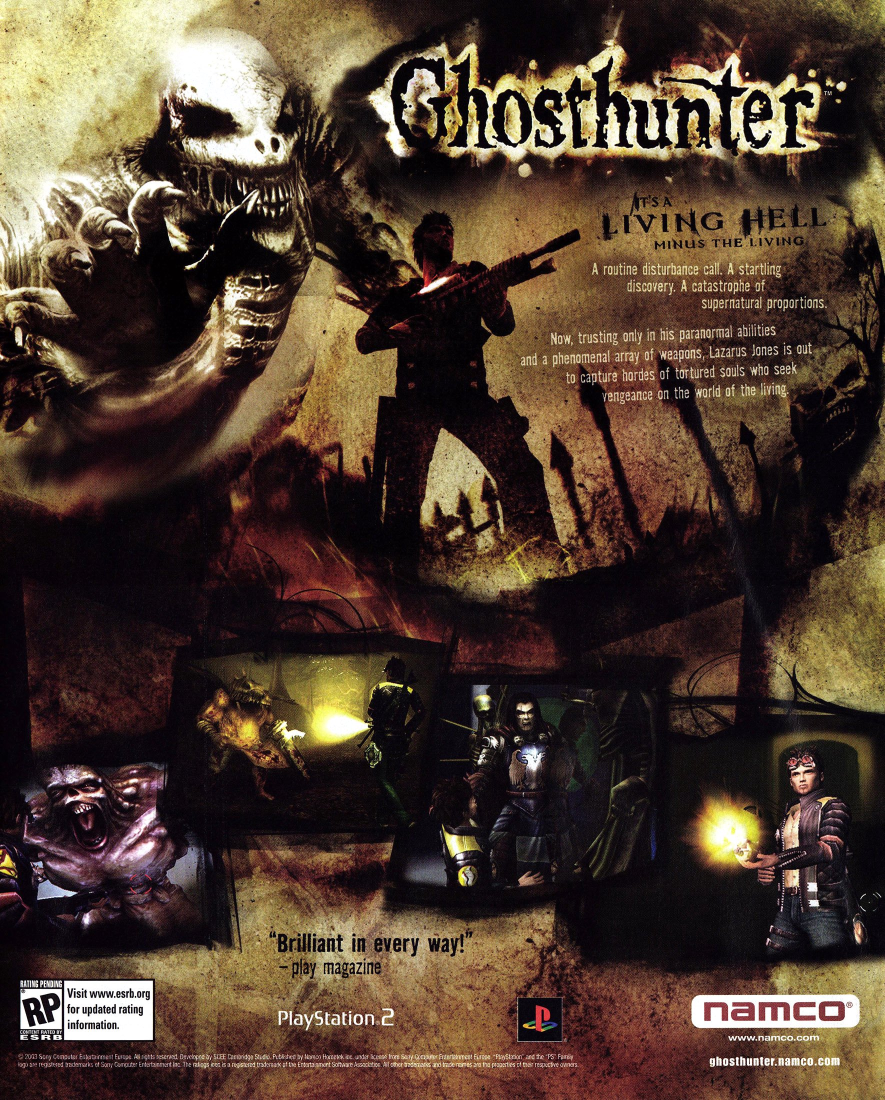


DEATH BY DEGREES

Remember the stacks of quarters you used to spend in your quest to challenge the reigning *Tekken* master at the local arcade? Or the verbal slap fights about *Tekken* versus *Virtua Fighter*? No? OK, then you're a lot younger than we are.

Now, original *Tekken* fighter Nina is getting ported off to her own game, *Death by Degrees*. Instead of the one-on-one combat she's grown up with, this time she's a spy who's been charged with tracking down a supersecret fancy weapon. The game features a 360-degree combat system via the right analog stick (à la *Rise to Honor*), and Nina will alternate among using stealth as she explores areas, utilizing weapons to combat enemies, and fighting off her opponents with some of her signature *Tekken* moves. Nina fans will be thrilled that there are skimpy costumes and crotch shots galore, although they may find the gameplay a little lacking. Our time with the game left us a bit unimpressed, but hopefully the final product will be better than what we've seen so far.

Pub. Namco **Dev.** Namco **Release** October



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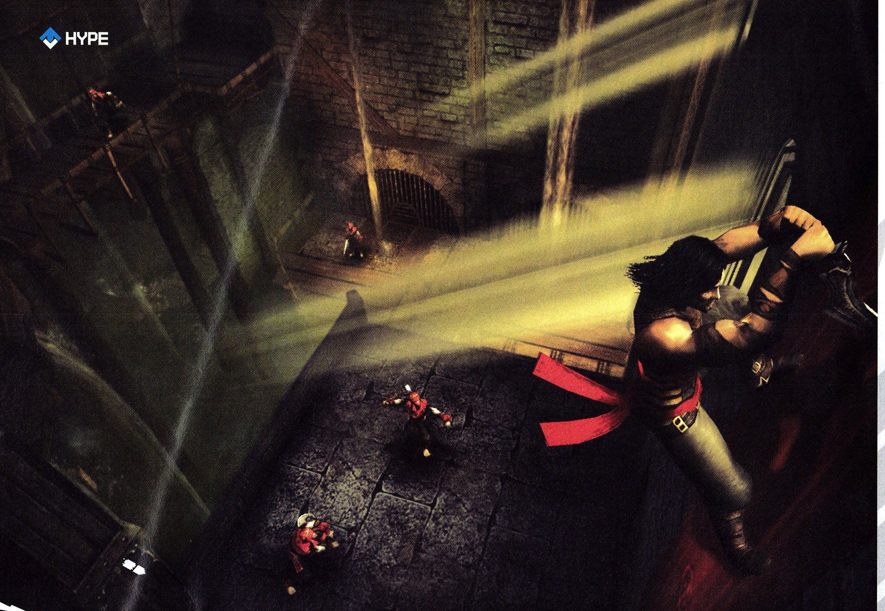
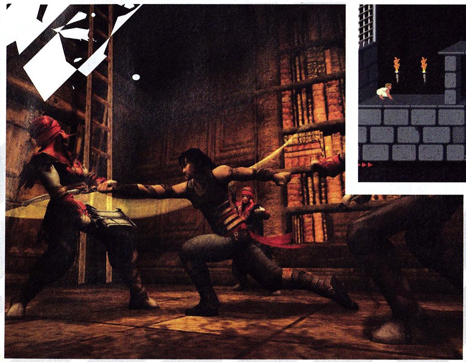
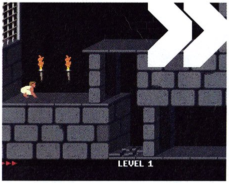


PRINCE OF PERSIA





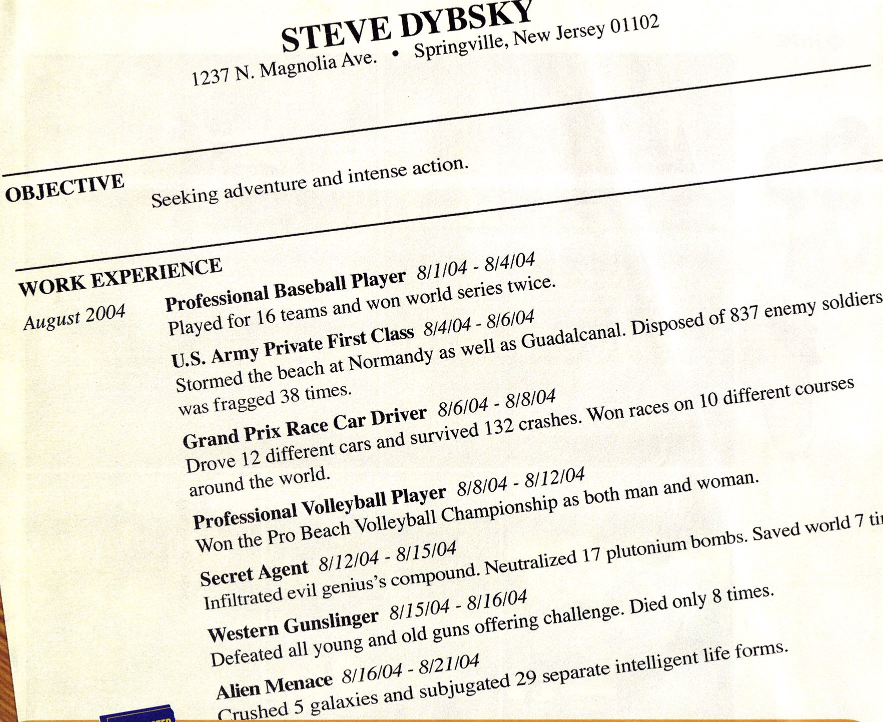
The original *Prince of Persia* (top) may not look like much these days, but trust us—it was totally mind-blowing at the time.

The original *Prince of Persia*, released on the Apple II in 1989, was an innovative platform game with awesome animation. Last year's remake was...er...an innovative platform game with awesome animation. For the next game in the series, which is still unnamed as we go to press, the development team at Ubisoft is focusing on making it darker, moodier, and more action packed. If you thought the fighting system in *The Sands of Time* was a little lacking, you'll be pleased to learn that *POP2* boasts an elaborate branching combo system that makes fighting feel more natural and less like a handful of potted moves. Particular sequences of moves will open up new opportunities and require a steadier, more-considered approach to fighting rather than the rapid button mangling of the last game.

This is an interesting direction for the franchise to take, since the original and its notoriously difficult sequel, *Prince of Persia: The Shadow and the Flame*, released in 1993, were more about avoiding traps and solving puzzles than they were about kicking ass.

Check back next month, when we'll have an exclusive hands-on look at this new chapter.

Pub. Ubisoft **Dev.** Ubisoft **Release** November



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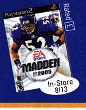

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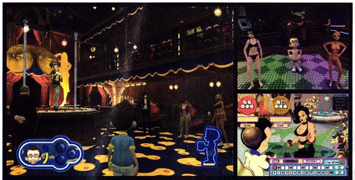


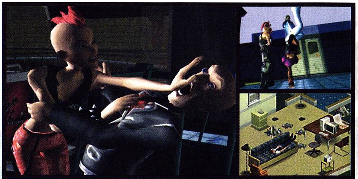
LEISURE SUIT LARRY: MAGNA CUM LAUDE

Is the old-school adventure game dead? Well…yeah…it pretty much is. But we're happy to see that Vivendi Universal is overlooking this fact to resurrect—at least sort of—one of the genre's most beloved characters. Now old and graying, Larry Laffer leaves his legacy to his nephew Larry Lovage, now in his sixth year of college, in *Leisure Suit Larry: Magna Cum Laude.*

Uncle Larry's time in the limelight included six Larry games for the PC. The first game featured 16-color graphics and involved actually typing in commands. By 1997, Laffer's final appearance (*Love for Sail!*, pictured) looked more like a cartoon and was all point and click. But one theme remained constant: trying to score with chicks (and usually striking out).

Magna continues the tradition with 3D graphics and console-friendly gameplay. It's very *simple* gameplay—basically just a series of minigames—so the game depends largely on its humor. This begs another question: Is *Magna* funny enough to hold your interest? So far, the answer is yes.

Pub. Vivendi Universal **Dev.** High Voltage **Release** October

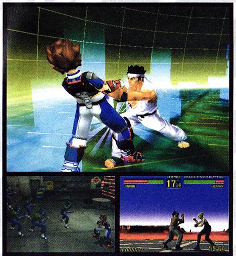


THE URBZ: SIMS IN THE CITY

***The Sims* proved to be** an effective gateway drug to the world of games for women and girls the world over, eventually becoming the No. 1-selling game franchise of all time. So it seems only natural that the franchise would reinvent itself in an attempt at capturing the coveted 16-to-35-year-old male gaming demographic. After all, they buy games and love hip-hop—so a game combining the two should be a license to print money, no?

While the gameplay and interface are similar to those in *The Sims, The Urbz* ditches the calm suburban existence and moves to the city. Rather than spending your days doing the dishes, watering the plants, and making nice with the wife, you'll be getting tattoos, hustling for your boss at the chop shop, and hitting the clubs. Each Urb's primary goal will be to further his rep—the better your rep, the more access you'll have to the most exclusive places and people. We'll have to wait and see if *The Urbz* is anything more than gold plating on the same old gameplay.

Pub. EA Games **Dev.** EA Maxis **Release** November

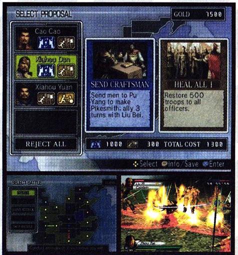


VIRTUA QUEST

Though its gameplay mechanics are poor in comparison to today's fighters, Sega's *Virtua Fighter* was at the forefront of the 3D revolution. Its use of polygons and slick animation would be used as blueprints for almost every 3D fighter to follow. And the series only got better with each release. *Virtua Fighter 2* was widely regarded not only as the best fighting game at the time, but also the most technically impressive. Even now, *Virtua Fighter 4* remains as one of the top 3D fighters on PlayStation 2, which is no small feat.

But instead of giving us *Virtua Fighter 5*, Sega's opted to *Pokémon*-ify the *Virtua Fighter* universe with *Virtua Quest.* The reason we use the *p* word is because the main character in the game, Sei, basically has to obtain the powers of the *Virtua Fighter* characters by obtaining Virtua Souls. It sounds a little virtua nutty, but think of it as a slightly toned-down version of a *Virtua Fighter* fighting game that has more in common with an action-RPG than anything else.

Pub. Sega **Dev.** Sega **Release** Fall

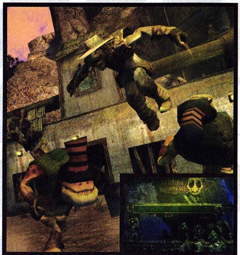


DYNASTY WARRIORS 4: EMPIRES

If you think there are too many *Dynasty Warriors* games, you're not alone—*Empires* marks the series' sixth appearance (and that's not including the very similar *Samurai Warriors*) on a PS2 console that still isn't quite 4 years old. So by now you probably have a good idea of what the *Warriors* franchise is all about—and that'd be massive battles set in Three Kingdoms–era China in which you control one warrior on a field of thousands.

Truth be told, that's still the majority of what you'll find in *Empires.* However, Koei is also implementing some real strategy into the game. After you've chosen your kingdom, you spend quite a bit of time navigating menus and looking at a map, where your goal is to conquer all of China. Beyond selecting which area to take over next, you also have to decide things like whether to form alliances or if it's worth your gold to recruit a beaten general into your army. This isn't *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, but it certainly adds a welcome sense of depth.

Pub. Koei **Dev.** Koei **Release** September



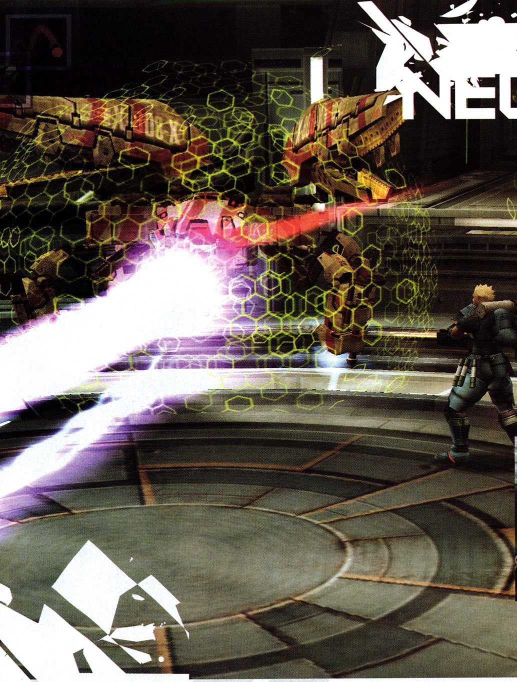
ODDWORLD: STRANGER

A weird alien whose lips are sewn shut and who goes around farting and shrugging is an unlikely mascot. Yet Abe's quirky charm and quest to free the mudokons from being turned into food in *Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee* captured gamers looking for something different than the usual run-and-gun affair. A couple of games later in *Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee*, Oddworld welcomed Munch, Abe's wheelchair-bound buddy who helped Abe fight the glukkons.

Now, *Oddworld: Stranger* appears to be a far cry from Abe's puzzles and farts and Munch's speedy wheels. We say "appears to be" because Oddworld Inhabitants is still keeping mum on most of the details. All that creator Lorne Lanning will reveal at this point is that *Stranger* is a badass bounty hunter who makes his way across the Oddworld universe taking down criminals. While *Stranger* will be a more action-oriented game, Lanning promises that the trademark *Oddworld* wit will be present.

Pub. EA Games **Dev.** Oddworld Inhabitants **Release** 2005

NEO CONTRA



Side-scrolling run-and-gun action with a mixture of vertical shooting is almost as much a trademark of the *Contra* series as the Konami code, and if you don't know what that is, then shame on you. Almost every single *Contra* game has relied on the formula introduced in the NES classic except for *Contra: Legacy of War*, which used a top-down perspective but was so incredibly bad that it's best forgotten.

So it's somewhat surprising that Konami has gone back to that perspective with *Neo Contra*, but don't think it won't pack any less of a punch because of that. There's still plenty of action to be had thanks to a good assortment of weapons (including the spread weapon that was so desperately missing from the previous *Contra* game), as well as some rather interesting enemy designs, such as a gigantic baby head that sprouts from the mouth of a fanged artichoke. And one of the playable characters is a samurai from the future! How can you possibly go wrong with that?

Pub. Konami **Dev.** Konami **Release** November

The original *Contra* is one of the finest side-scrolling shooters to ever hit the arcades. Too bad previous revamps have flopped.

continued from page 040

Young concurs. "You can still invent within the framework of preexisting franchises," he says. "Not because it's commercially safer, but because it allows you to focus on the invention that will truly move the medium instead of having to re-create the same old things again just to get to the starting point of innovation." In other words, using an established franchise for a jumping-off point allows for *more* creativity, since the designers don't need to spend as much time on backstory—or on building the basic technology. But how do designers find this delicate balance of familiarity and invention?

"I don't think there is a unique recipe," Yannis Mallat, the producer who brought *Prince of Persia* into stunningly gorgeous 3D with *The Sands of Time*, tells us. "Franchises are not the unique key to success. Franchises are worth it only if you try hard to make each sequel unique by providing new emotions, new gameplay, and new challenges. I just think you need to try to keep being innovative. This is challenging; there might be failures. But in the long term, I do think it pays off."

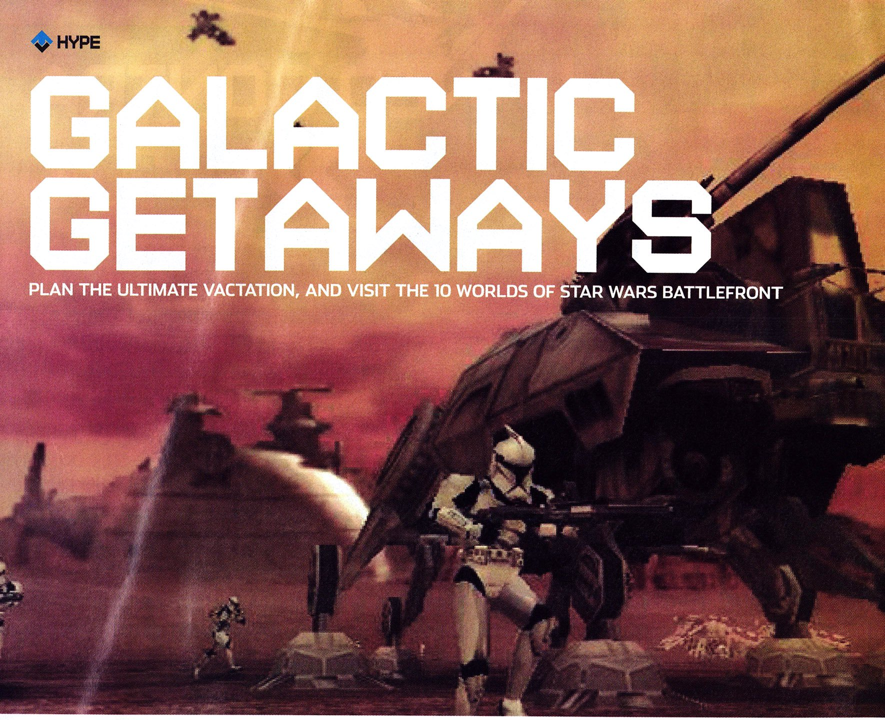
"It either works or it doesn't," agrees Allison, "but it's something every publisher is smart to attempt to do. For example, *Pitfall* was a huge brand 20 years ago, but it has never found a large new audience as a reinvented title. But it was worth the shot for Activision."

"This is a tough road to go down," cautions John Smedley, president of Sony Online Entertainment, which recently gave its *EverQuest* brand a drastic retooling with *Champions of Norrath*. "If you make a mistake, it can damage a franchise in a major way. To me, the only way this makes sense is if you feel the game can stand by itself and doesn't need any marketing hooks. The road to hell is paved with examples of people pushing a franchise too far." We can think of a few examples.

InXile's Fargo is similarly ambivalent about rehashing franchises. "A character can only endure by being unique," he says, "and by not being driven into the ground by marketing folks. There have been some great game characters over the years that I have seen beaten into submission by a quick succession of lame sequels, only to have their coolness destroyed."

So, in order for a game to succeed, it has to be familiar but not *too* familiar—innovative but not *too* innovative. It's a very fine line to walk. Doubtless, some of the games you see in these pages will make the most of their familiar backgrounds and go on to widespread success. Doubtless, others will prove too unusual for the average consumer...or too similar to their predecessors to be worth the bother. One thing is certain: The trend of revisiting franchises is not likely to go away anytime soon, not as long as there are classic franchises to exhume. As Mallat says, "There are plenty of games that are waiting in the cupboards. If you are a very creative team, you may find the recipe to bring them back to life—but it's not an easy task." «

> **"FRANCHISES ARE NOT THE UNIQUE KEY TO SUCCESS."**



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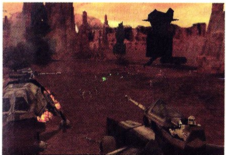
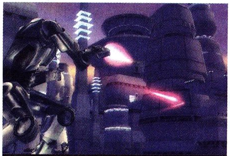


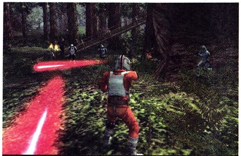
RUGGED GEONOSIS

All the way at the Outer Rim lies Geonosis, with scenery so amazing you'd think only a computer could generate it. Majestic red-hued mesas and buttes decorate the topography, while long stretches of parched desert hardpan appear in just the right places so as not to spoil you with continuous eye candy. Recent developments suggest a remarkably healthy local economy due to increased industrial activity. Be sure to pack bug spray, in case you run into the natives. We heartily suggest chartering a Republic attack gunship for this area.



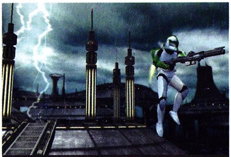
HEAVENLY CLOUD CITY

Ever feel like your head is in the clouds? Well, it should be! Baron Administrator Lando Calrissian humbly invites you to Cloud City, a wondrous colony floating above the gas giant Bespin. Gaze into the beautifully colored heavens or take on the galaxy's best sabacc players in a first-class casino. And for those of you looking to keep a, shall we say, "low profile," rest assured that Mr. Calrissian has just made a deal that will keep the Empire out of here forever. Also, pay no mind to the sculpture shaped like a man trapped in carbonite.



LUSH ENDOR

Tucked away in the galaxy's uncharted territory, the forest moon of Endor provides the ideal escape for your inner outdoorsman. Humongous trees tower hundreds of meters above you, and wildlife abounds in the verdant environment. Barring a climactic battle between the Galactic Empire and the Rebellion, you'll learn soon enough why Endor is also known as the Sanctuary Moon. Do beware of traps set by primitive savages known as Ewoks, however. If one should approach, simply shoot the animal in the head and enjoy the rest of your stay.



AQUATIC KAMINO

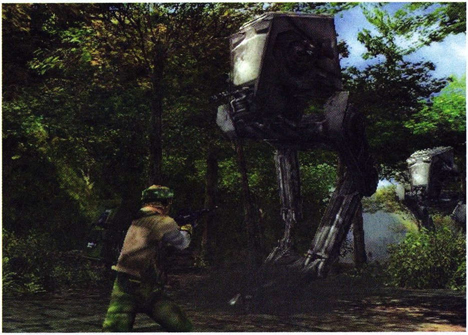
Deep-sea fishermen will find no more desirable location than Kamino, a planet whose stilt-mounted cities were constructed atop its completely aquatic surface. When you're not on the water, enjoy your stay in hospitable Tipoca City. Thanks to its galactically renowned cloning facility, jetpack-using travelers who accidentally fall into the water and die can come right back in an instant. But please, don't forget to pack a good umbrella, for rain has been known to fall from time to time. A little Dramamine wouldn't hurt, either.

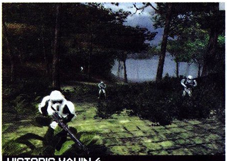
SUNNY TATOOINE

Every planet has its awesome sunrises. But only Tatooine has two per day as its twin suns dispel the cool, crisp desert night. Some might not like the sand, since it's coarse, rough, irritating, and gets everywhere—but only the more detestable folks of the galaxy feel this way. Good people such as yourself want to see as much sand as you can, from Beggar's Canyon to the Jundland Wastes. Be sure to brush up on your Huttese; you never know whom you might run into (if you run into "native" Tusken raiders, you're certainly allowed to take a shot).

ADVENTUROUS HOTH

Landscapes of constant snow and ice may sound like turnoffs to normal people, but we know you're so much more than a normal person, aren't you? Besides, where else can you go tauntaun-back riding? (Lessons unavailable at this time.) You might even see other indigenous wildlife, like the wampa ice creature—just make sure you keep your distance, especially during breeding season. And we must insist that you make it inside before sundown. We wouldn't want a good customer like you to die on us.





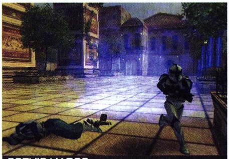
HISTORIC YAVIN 4

Originally settled by Sith Lord Naga Sadow and his followers, the generations to follow would evolve into the Massassi race. No one knows what happened to the legendary warriors, but their impressively huge temples remain scattered throughout the jungle-ridden moon to this day. An absolute must-see, the Great Temple sits at the crest of a prodigious hill; the structure's size and location make it the perfect base for any type of army in need, especially a rebellious one. The lush foliage is also conducive to exciting speeder bike races.

CHECK OUT OUR DVD NEXT MONTH!
We'll have a playable demo of Endor from *Star Wars Battlefront* for you.

SACRED RHEN VAR

Some have referred to Rhen Var as a "frozen wasteland." Blasphemers. If an atmospheric cataclysm hadn't permanently disrupted the planet's ecosystem thousands of years ago, we'd still be able to see the ancient Jedi monuments that once permeated a fertile paradise. Now, the planet lies in the midst of an ice age, but devout followers of the Force such as yourself will have no trouble seeing the allure of icy plains, brutal tundra, and glacier-carved mountains. This clean scenery is also good for calming trots in your AT-ST.



SCENIC NABOO

Rolling plains, green hills, picturesque waterfalls, and distinct architecture compose Naboo, truly one of the galaxy's most wondrous planets. We recommend staying in Theed, the capital city, known for its remarkable royal palace and sublime canals. You could even hop aboard a historic Trade Federation armored assault tank for an armed tour of the city. In your spare time, you might choose to take a bongo underwater to see the bubblelike settlements of the Gungans. Don't get too close, though. They'sa no like visitors.

TOP-SECRET LOCATION

Our tour guide, LucasArts, has another possible destination in store for you—one that it won't even tell us about at this time (though we did notice a LucasArts employee checking out a history disc entitled *Knights of the Old Republic*). But we're certain that this top-secret escape location is absolutely fabulous—after all, as a destination from Galactic Getaways, there's no way it can't be. Watch for future brochures; we may even reveal LucasArts' other battlefield—er, we mean pleasurable vacation spot.

APOCALYPSE NOW

ARE YOU READY FOR A NEW RESIDENT EVIL MOVIE?

At the end of *Resident Evil*, Alice (Milla Jovovich) looks absolutely pissed. You would be, too, if your only reward for narrowly escaping droves of undead monsters in the Umbrella Corporation's underground hive was to awaken and find yourself the object of some sort of experiment. Next thing you know, you've escaped to what you're expecting to be the refuge of a peaceful Midwestern town called Raccoon City—only now it looks more like the aftermath of a war zone.

Yeah, odds are you'd wanna kick some ass like Alice does. And fortunately for us moviegoers, it looks like she'll be doing plenty of that in Screen Gems' *Resident Evil: Apocalypse*.

"Alice has emerged as a much more decisive character," says Jovovich. "She has also become an experiment of the Umbrella Corporation—a guinea pig in a sense—infected with the T-Virus. All she knows is that through this experiment, Umbrella has unwittingly given her a weapon that can take them on, and she's going to use it." Jovovich spent four tough months preparing for the demanding role—everything from weapons training to studying a Brazilian martial art known as Capoeira. "I definitely have a talent with violent objects," jokes the actress.

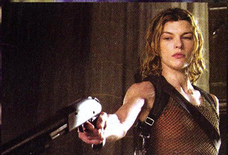
Jovovich's dedication enabled the filmmakers to go well beyond their original plans for Alice's action sequences. Whether she's reenacting the unforgettable opening cut-scene to *Code: Veronica X* or running 20 feet straight down a building, Jovovich excels in her role—she's essentially a superhero in a cute skirt. Stunt coordinator Steve Lucescu was particularly impressed with Jovovich's abilities. "The most elaborate fight scene is between Alice and Nemesis," he explains. "It started with 30 or 40 moves, but then Milla really got into it, and it became *180* moves."

Did someone say Nemesis? You bet. Unlike the first *Resident Evil*, which served as a prequel to all the madness to ensue in games to come, *Apocalypse* actually incorporates some events from *Resident Evil 2* and most of the action from *Resident Evil 3*. With the territory comes characters such as Carlos Olivera (Oded Fehr, *The Mummy*) and fanboy favorite Jill Valentine (Sienna Guillory, Helen in USA's *Helen of Troy*), both of whom meet up with Alice as they try to survive Umbrella's threat in a quarantined Raccoon City.

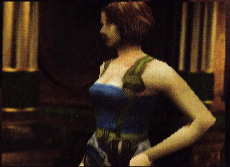
"My first reaction [to seeing the character in the game] was, 'Whoa, check out the bumps!'" laughs Guillory (herself rather "bumpy"). "Jill's got everything a girl wants—she dresses to kill, says whatever she wants, and can shoot anyone between the eyes within a 50-yard radius. She's hard as nails and she's great fun. And not at all afraid of being quite the sexy minx."

Writer/producer Paul W.S. Anderson certainly approves of his cast, but he's chosen to remove himself from the director's chair this time, and has hand-chosen Alexander Witt, who makes his directorial debut. Anderson, who brought *Mortal Kombat* to the big screen in 1995, is still actively involved, however, because, as producer Jeremy Bolt tells us, "He doesn't want to see another *Mortal Kombat: Annihilation*." Good move, Paul.

Does that mean *Apocalypse* is actually a good movie, though? We'll find out come the weekend of September 10. «



"I HAVE A TALENT WITH VIOLENT OBJECTS."



SHE'S GOT THE MOVES

Sienna Guillory took her preparations for becoming Jill Valentine seriously, as she demonstrated when we visited the set. Not only did she claim to have played *Resident Evil 3* extensively—"It's hard!" she says—she also made it a point to nail every one of Jill's animations, from how she draws a gun to the way she looks when she interacts with others. "She does this little arm thing," Guillory tells us, totally actualizing the *RE3* screenshot to the left, "and she's like, 'Carlos....' And then there's this other thing with her hand to the side," she says of Jill's idle animation. "I've been working on that wiggle thing."

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ATARI

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FIVE THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT

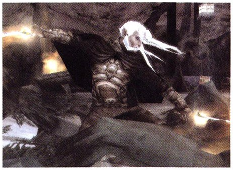
FORGOTTEN REALMS: DEMON STONE

1 It's all action, all the time. In all of its 30 years, *Dungeons & Dragons* has never really been the most action-packed pastime. The pen-and-paper RPG—the original RPG—has always been more about, well, roleplaying than hack-n-slash action. And of all the videogames based on the series, only a small handful have had any real excitement to them, most notably the console iterations of the *Baldur's Gate* series (also set in the Forgotten Realms universe, incidentally). So, it's exciting to see an action-packed free-roaming fighting game with an epic cinematic style that still manages to remain true to its roots.

2 It's very much a *D&D* game. While the heat of battle is a visceral, arcadey experience, once you finish a level, it's time to upgrade your characters in true *D&D* fashion. You'll purchase new armor and weapons, as well as upgrade each of the three playable character's abilities, with every item and upgrade drawn straight from the Forgotten Realms sourcebooks. Even better, your weapon and armor choices are instantly reflected in your characters; each character has at least five complete costume changes that will show their progress in a very noticeable way. You'll even be able to preview your purchases—from a new robe for the sorcerer to a new combo for the fighter—before you buy.

3 If you're not into *D&D*, no problem. If you don't want to micromanage your purchases and upgrades after every level, you don't have to. Just choose the "auto-buy" option and the game will intelligently select the best choices for you, leaving you free to dive into the next level instantly.

4 The game packs some seriously big-name talent. The character of Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun—a vastly experienced wizard who also serves as the game's narrator—is voiced by Patrick "Capt. Jean-Luc Picard of the *USS Enterprise*" Stewart. His nemesis, the Slaad Lord Ygorl, is played by the inhumanly huge Michael Clarke Duncan. And the game's story was written by RA Salvatore, the most prolific and beloved writer to work in the Forgotten Realms universe and creator of the ridiculously popular dark elf Drizzt Do'Urden. As if that weren't enough, Robert Goodman, an Emmy Award–winning writer for *Batman Beyond*, has been contracted specifically to work on the game's dialogue. So, yeah, they're serious about the game; as Don Daglow, president and CEO of developer Stormfront, says, "If you want a great story in a storytelling game, get good writers."



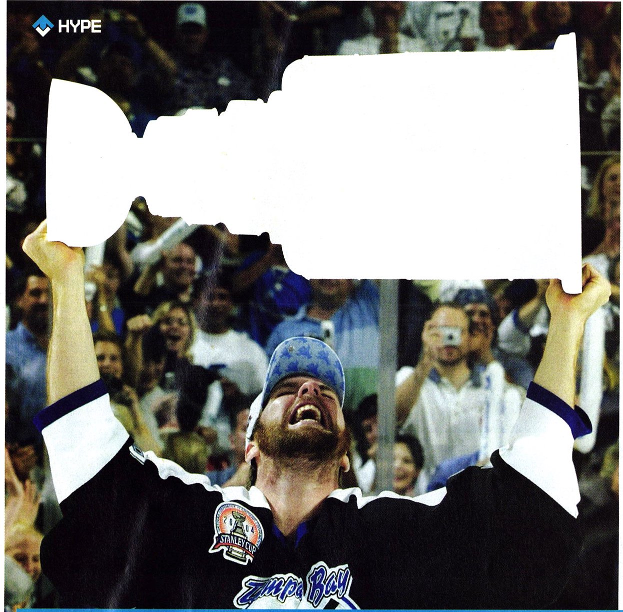
5 You can play as Drizzt. Forgotten Realms fans will be pleased to learn that a sequence set in Mithral Hall has you taking on the role of Salvatore's überfamous dark elf as he helps our heroes defend his home from invading trolls. «

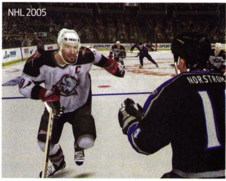
THREE THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT STORMFRONT STUDIOS

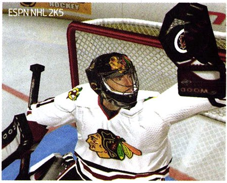
1. The studio has been making Forgotten Realms games for 13 years. In fact, Stormfront was responsible for the very first massively multiplayer RPG, 1991's *Neverwinter Nights* (not to be confused with the 2002 BioWare game of the same name), which ran as part of the AOL service from 1991 to 1997.
2. The same engine has been in use for more than six years. It made its first appearance long before *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*—in the ill-fated RPG *The Legend of Alon D'ar*. Since then, it's undergone countless revisions (to the tune of around $6 million) to produce the slick scenes you see here.
3. Stormfront actively seeks diversity in its creative teams, and all of its current project leads are women. This, sadly, is still quite unusual. Industry veteran Alyssa Finley (who also worked on *The Two Towers*) is overseeing *Demon Stone*.

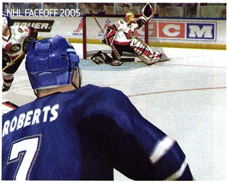
CHECK OUT OUR DVD NEXT MONTH!

We'll have an awesome playable demo of *Demon Stone* for you.




NHL 2005

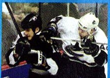

ESPN NHL 2K5


NHL FACEOFF 2005

THE NHL ON ICE

WILL A LABOR DISPUTE LEAVE HOCKEY FANS OUT IN THE COLD? NOT ON PS2

September 15 looms as a dark day for hockey fans. The current collective bargaining agreement between players and owners expires that day; if there's not a new one in place by then, the owners will lock the players out of training camp, jeopardizing the season. This won't mean we'll be deprived of high-sticking action, though—with three hockey games coming out this year, there are plenty of options for a virtual season.



TOP FEATURE CUT FROM 2005 GAMES

The Todd Bertuzzi neck-breaking, hospitalizing, career-threatening, "sucker-punch" button.

NHL 2005

Unlucky 13 is how many years EA Sports has been making hockey games, and for the last seven there's been little reason to rejoice. But since there might not be a season this, er, season, *NHL 2005* has a feather in its Jofa: It includes all eight international World Cup of Hockey teams.

The gameplay—which has kept this franchise from eclipsing the *ESPN NHL* series—focuses on open ice control. Now, through the miracle of modern gaming, you're able to control two players at once, allowing you to position players better for one-timers and 2-on-1 plays. Let's just hope EA cleans up the passing, so it matters. Also, expect an overhauled dynasty mode in which an owner's ideology dictates his team's goals and bank account.

Pub. EA Sports **Dev.** EA Canada **Release** August 24

ESPN NHL 2K5

This is our early pick for "game to play because there isn't any real hockey." Already last year's go-to hockey sim, *ESPN NHL 2K5* plans on maintaining its tentative top spot. We say "tentative" because the myriad bugs in last year's game kept it from setting the PS2's gold standard for hockey.

This year will see the bugs fixed, along with two major improvements: The rough stuff gets rougher and the franchise mode gets refurbished. Now you can dish out cheap shots (slash to the ankle, elbow to the throat, etc.), which raises the tension meter, which ultimately leads to fisticuffs. In a fight, you can grapple, jab, uppercut, and even skate around freely before dropping the haymaker. As for franchise mode, expect to see full coaching staffs and interact with minor leagues. You can even scout players by having them run drills. You'll need to this year. Without real hockey, how else are you going to know who to sign?

Pub. Sega **Dev.** Kush Games **Release** September 7

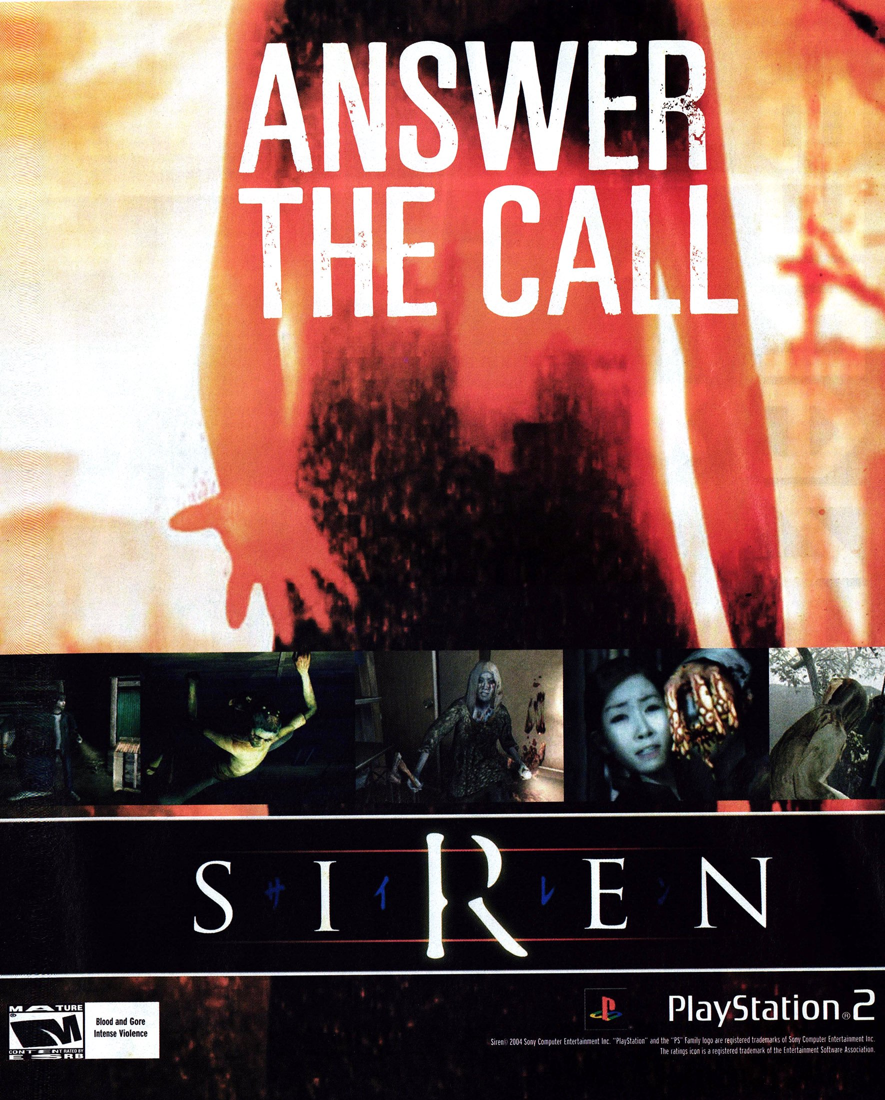
NHL FACEOFF 2005

New developer, new graphics, and a brand-new start for 989 Sports' hockey franchise—just in time for the new season to be canceled. Sometimes it seems like the heavens are against the powers that be over at 989. But unfazed, Sony aims to make its own luck with the help of Page 44 Studios (*NHL 2001, Freekstyle*).

Our favorite new feature, rivalry mode, keeps tabs on your interbuddy rivalries. It tracks lifetime records against your friends, including wins, losses, assists, goals, and points per player. Now you'll have facts to back up all the trash talk. The create-a-team also tickles our fancy (with more than 175 logos), as do the online franchises.

How will this game fare in a crowded field? No telling. But if it plays like the turn-of-the-millennium *FaceOffs*, we're quite interested. «

Pub. Sony CEA **Dev.** Page 44 Studios **Release** September


ANSWER
THE CALL
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Blood and Gore
Intense Violence
PlayStation®2

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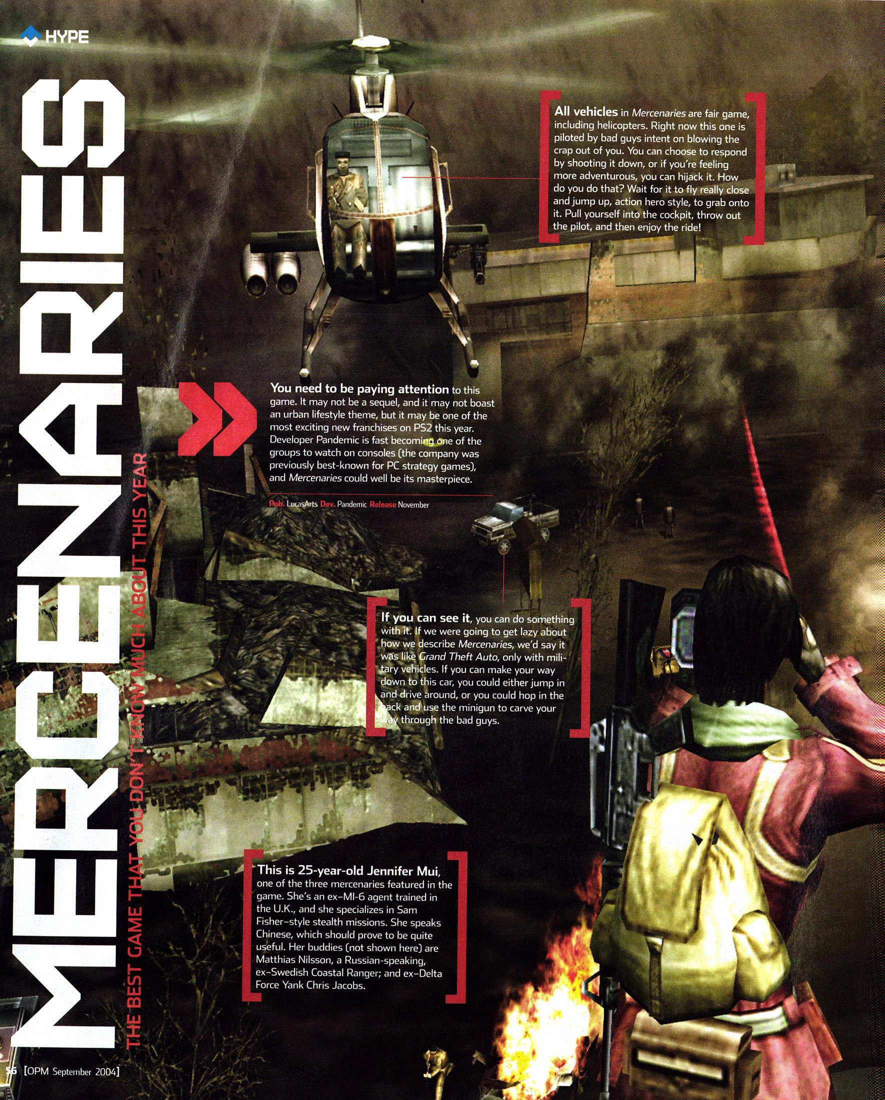
MERCENARIES

THE BEST GAME THAT YOU DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THIS YEAR



You need to be paying attention to this game. It may not be a sequel, and it may not boast an urban lifestyle theme, but it may be one of the most exciting new franchises on PS2 this year. Developer Pandemic is fast becoming one of the groups to watch on consoles (the company was previously best-known for PC strategy games), and *Mercenaries* could well be its masterpiece.

Pub. LucasArts **Dev.** Pandemic **Release** November

All vehicles in *Mercenaries* are fair game, including helicopters. Right now this one is piloted by bad guys intent on blowing the crap out of you. You can choose to respond by shooting it down, or if you're feeling more adventurous, you can hijack it. How do you do that? Wait for it to fly really close and jump up, action hero style, to grab onto it. Pull yourself into the cockpit, throw out the pilot, and then enjoy the ride!

If you can see it, you can do something with it. If we were going to get lazy about how we describe *Mercenaries*, we'd say it was like *Grand Theft Auto*, only with military vehicles. If you can make your way down to this car, you could either jump in and drive around, or you could hop in the back and use the minigun to carve your way through the bad guys.

This is 25-year-old Jennifer Mui, one of the three mercenaries featured in the game. She's an ex–MI-6 agent trained in the U.K., and she specializes in Sam Fisher–style stealth missions. She speaks Chinese, which should prove to be quite useful. Her buddies (not shown here) are Matthias Nilsson, a Russian-speaking, ex–Swedish Coastal Ranger; and ex–Delta Force Yank Chris Jacobs.

While engaging in your private military shenanigans, you can hook up with the Allied forces, the South Koreans, the Russian Mafia, or the Chinese. Each of these organizations has its own motivation for needing your services, and the dynamic that the conflicting interests has on the story line is a bit like the gangs in *Vice City*. If you play through every mission, there are 52 "targets" for you to go after.

According to Matthew Paul, the producer of the game at Pandemic, "If you can see it, you can use it, drive it, or destroy it. In fact, you are running loose on a playground of destruction, and you have the ability to destroy every building and every object in the world with reckless abandon. To many, this is hours of fun in and of itself." Sure sounds pretty good to us.

Every object in the game world is managed by a comprehensive physics engine which ensures that all objects react to one another. The crates you can see here are bouncing around (and will eventually smash) as a result of an explosion offscreen. If this tank were to be hit, its turret would fly off, and the resulting explosion would take out other nearby vehicles, too.

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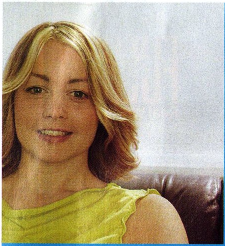
PARTY UP IN HERE

CELEBRITIES FLOCK TO THE PLAYSTATION 2 ESTATE

Yes, there's a PlayStation 2 estate. Yes, it's quite large—about 12,500 square feet on six acres. And yes, it's in the Hamptons, the perfect setting for an annual gathering of people who already live in enormous mansions but feel like spending the weekend at a different enormous mansion just because they can. To help pamper guests, a PlayStation 2 (as well as high-priced furniture) was included in each attendee's private room. Among the celebrities showing up at the event were Paris Hilton, who was promoting her new record label and playing *Ratchet & Clank* with flavor of the week Nick Carter. Rapper Jay-Z also joined the party to show off a new model of tennis shoe he is launching with Reebok.

But there was a worthy cause underneath the explicit display of wealth. Sean "P. Diddy" Combs, who showed up with an original copy of the Declaration of Independence, used the annual "White Party" event to help promote Citizen Change, an organization that encourages youths and minorities to vote, particularly in the upcoming presidential election. Def Jam founder Russell Simmons, the Reverend Al Sharpton, and Lennox Lewis all made an appearance to show support. «

NOW THAT'S CO-OP PLAY!
Clockwise from top: Paris Hilton and Nick Carter lock lips; Jay-Z looks confused; Russell Simmons and Al Sharpton are unimpressed by P. Diddy; the PlayStation 2 estate.



ZOE FLOWER

HANDS-FREE REALITY

ZOE FLOWER
aka "Gamer Girl," creates TV programs and music videos, and looks good doing it. See the details at www.zoeflower.com.

After a recent injurious incident involving a soccer ball and a rusty nail, I've had far too much time to lounge around the house and hypothesize about the future of the videogame industry. I am temporarily incapable of playing games that require manual dexterity without suffering a spastic fit of pain in my sprained thumb followed by waves of endorphins that render me useless with a controller. I have consulted a physiotherapist in the hopes of finding a way to tape the digit or at least strengthen it but instead received the professional opinion of "You're screwed."

Had my thumb been my only injury, games like *DDR* would have found their way back into my daily routine. Alas, the nail through the ball of my right foot has taken me off the disco circuit, but not before an engaging performance in one-legged oni mode (attempt this only if you're willing to live with a single overdeveloped quadriceps). It has been in this surreal and subdued state and partway through a *Star Trek* marathon that I started pondering the topic of virtual reality.

I have come to the very reasonable conclusion that someone from the future has been sent back to the present (OK, maybe *T2* was on before *Star Trek*) with the sole purpose of making a mockery of gamers via anything labeled "VR." This theory backs up my second theory of a government conspiracy to cover up *real* viable VR technology by creating bad movies and silly games that require ridiculous contraptions and/or plotlines.

I thought gamers would have clued in after *Tekken Virtual Arena* proved how lame it was to hang out at the arcade and kick and punch the air around you without much result. What is the fascination with designing games that require us to wave our arms and contort our bodies in order to play? Why must we don ridiculous headgear that conjures up images of Stevie Wonder in a Boba Fett helmet? And why is that considered futuristic?

At E3 this year, I was coerced into playing the PS2 demo of *Antigrav*, which showcased the "future of gaming" using EyeToy technology. Granted, I did have more fun suffering through the embarrassing, crowd-forming display of physical comedy required to hoverboard than I did playing Namco's *Death by Degrees* moments prior, but I'm just not so sure any amount of sensor-studded arm waving can convince me that this is the future.

WHY IS RIDICULOUS HEADWEAR CONSIDERED FUTURISTIC?

For now, I'll be looking forward to getting a firm grasp back on my controller. But perhaps there is something to be said for a potential future in which games free our minds *and* bodies to a reality where how we look isn't as important as how much fun we're having. «

RUMORS

ALL THE PLAYSTATION RUMORS THAT ARE FIT TO PRINT

EVEN MORE SPIDER-MAN

If the slightly above-average experience of playing *Spider-Man 2* has you jonesing for more, rest assured that there's plenty of web-slinging in PlayStation's future. Although the inevitable movie and game double whammy for *Spider-Man 3* isn't expected until May 2007, it should come as no surprise that our sources say Activision is working on a non-movie-related Spidey game. We know next to nothing about it except that it's happening, but let's play the deduction game, shall we? First of all, the upcoming *X-Men: Legends* is based on Marvel's Ultimate line of comics (which, if you didn't already know, revamps classic stories by placing them in contemporary settings). And here's something else to consider: Big-time comics writer Brian Michael Bendis recently wrote on his website's message board that he's scripting a Marvel game. True, he might be helping *Daredevil* finally hit consoles, but our money's on his most popular title...which would be *Ultimate Spider-Man*.

EXPECT A STREET SOCCER GAME SOON.

PORTABLE MANA

A recruitment posting on the Square Enix website for a new *Seiken Densetsu* project has U.S. fans understandably aflutter about the possibility of a new *Mana* game in the coming year. The posting reveals that the game is unlikely to be another Game Boy product, and upon further investigation, it would appear that this could be the publisher's first flirtation with PSP. Although Square Enix has been unusually reluctant to commit to the handheld (outside of *Advent Children*), rumors have been rife for a while that the company is seriously looking into at least one game for the system in its first year of release.

FANTASY MAY CRY

Sticking with Square Enix, those *FFVII*-done-*Devil May Cry*-style rumors have surfaced again. It's hard to tell whether it's wishful thinking, confusion over the new *Musashi* title (dude with spiky hair and a big sword), or a good, old-fashioned leak from Square. As ever, designer Tetsuya Nomura is the focal point for all rumors, but then he would be, wouldn't he? We'll keep digging and keep you posted on this one. Cloud going medieval on bad-guy ass in a full-on action game would be very cool.

YOU'RE SO FRICKIN' STREET

NBA Street proved so successful that the third installment is nearly upon us, and *NFL Street* did the business more than adequately for football (and there are rumors of a sequel already), so what's next? If the rumors are to be believed, we can expect EA Sports Big to bust out some kind of street soccer game, possibly called *FIFA Street*, before next summer. We've also heard that a *Street*-ified version of *Tiger Woods* is being kicked around at EA, too, although we're not entirely sure how practical that would be.

REZ TO MAKE A COMEBACK?

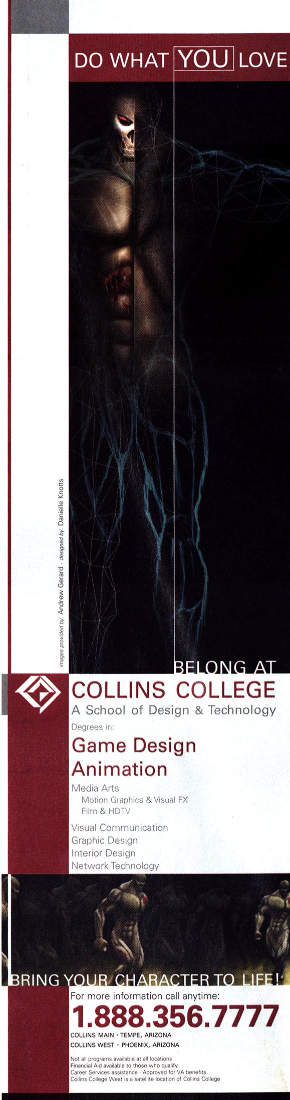
We've lost count of the number of times we've heard people say, "Sega really messed up with *Rez*. It should have pressed more copies or something, 'cuz that game rocked." Rumor has it that the powers that be are seriously considering doing one of two things, either 1) reissuing the original game and distributing more than 27 copies, or 2) giving the green light to a full-on sequel that will be backed up with a more positive attitude. Perhaps we'll see both. Keep an eye on www.1UP.com for news on this.

MONTHLY GRAN TURISMO RUMORS

Last month, we mentioned that *GT4* was expected to support, among other things, the EyeToy. Previously, we'd heard that this would be so you could put your face onto the driver that appears in each car model, but we've since learned that this is not the case. All drivers in the game will wear helmets, so what gives? What we hear now is that the EyeToy support may be specific to a limited-edition version of the game and that it may be used to unlock specific special features. Only four months before we find out for sure. «

QUICK HITS

- We hear that a sequel to *Psi-Ops* is already in pre-production.
- The *Gran Turismo* team is said to be working on a nonracing game. Smart money is on a possible sequel to *Omega Boost*.
- *Nico*, the sequel to *Ico*, will finally be confirmed at the Tokyo Game Show. Check www.1UP.com on September 24.
- There's a new *Onimusha* game in the works for PSP.


DO WHAT YOU LOVE

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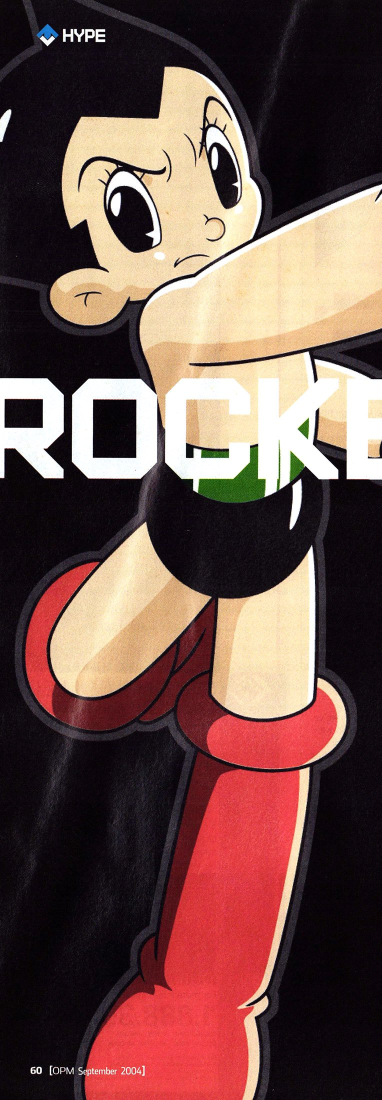
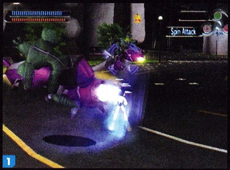


Astro Boy sure has a full plate this fall. Not only is he starring in a new game coming out for PS2, but the revitalized *Astro Boy* series has been spotted on both the WB and Cartoon Network. And to top it all off, he's being inducted into Carnegie Mellon University's Robot Hall of Fame on October 11 (alongside fellow robots C-3PO and Robby the Robot). Get a taste of the game on this month's demo disc, which gives you the chance to stretch your little rocket legs as everyone's favorite boy wonder. Rock on!

ROCKET MAN

ASTRO BOY SHOOTS FOR THE STARS



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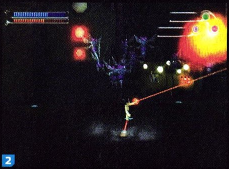

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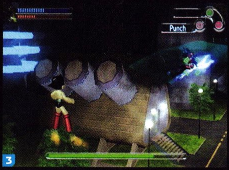


3

1 The demo-disc level starts out in the main square of Metro City, where Astro gets to battle some crazy purple bats (called "Bat-bots") and random purple dudes on hover-motorcycles (imaginatively titled "Motorcycle-bots"). Take out enemies by either punching them or by ripping up the lampposts (which handily stay lit even after being uprooted) and swinging them like baseball bats. Once all the opponents are charred to dust, head on up to the main hall and enter.

2 Hey look, kids! It's Dr. Tenma, Astro's nefarious creator! Hmmmmm...wonder what he has up his sleeve? Ah, but who cares right now—he's just given Astro his special laser-finger power, digibeam! And just in the nick of time, too, as a swarm of purple hornets is attacking. Fortunately, the digibeam seems to have an autoaim function built in, so just point in the general direction of the swarm and fire away. Be sure to keep an eye on the red bar meter, which measures the amount of power left for the digibeam. While waiting for charge-ups, Astro can ricochet around the inside of the building courtesy of those nifty rocket boots.

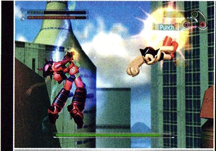
3 After defeating the purple hornets and lasering his way out of the building, Astro faces his toughest challenge yet: archenemy and brother robot Atlas, who has come "to destroy the puppets of the human race!" Apparently, Astro is one of these puppets, too, as Atlas begins attacking him immediately at the end of the cut-scene. Stun Atlas with the digibeam and then, while he's recovering, get close enough to punch him. During meter charges, dodge Atlas' punishing blue electric blasts. «

Pub. Sega **Dev.** Sonic Team **Release** August

Part robot. Part kid. All action.

Spin Attack

Use Astro's Arm Cannon to stop the Blue Knight.



Pack a 1,000,000 horsepower punch against Atlas.

Blast enemies with Astro's Digibeam Laser Finger.

PlayStation 2
ASTRO BOY
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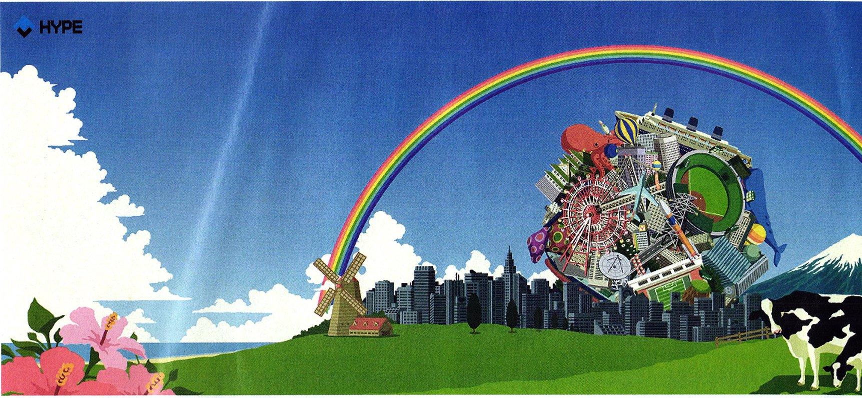


GAME IMPORT GET!

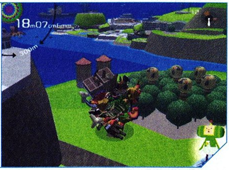
FROM THE LAND OF THE RISING FUN

A lot of times, gamers mope about how the quirkiest games from across the Pacific stay there and have to be imported, which then gets into weird modded or imported PS2 territory. Sometimes, though, companies take notice and bring their little cult games over to our side for proper release.

BIG KING
In *Katamari Damacy*, you're the "Space Prince" doing the work for the "King of All Cosmo." Really.

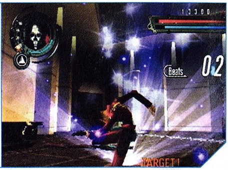
ROLLING DOWN THE RIVER

The most significant news is that the insanely popular and simple *Katamari Damacy* is getting a Stateside release this fall, courtesy of Namco. The four small kiosks demoing it at E3 were immensely popular, and all the grassroots buzz for it did the trick. The premise is simple: Create giant balls of "stuff" to convert to stars. Your ball attracts nearby objects and grows in size, much like a snowball rolling downhill. Except the ball has stuff like, oh, trees, park benches, cars, and national landmarks within it.



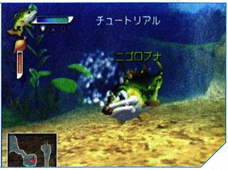
ASS-KICKING TO THE GRAVE

Any game in which a guy with a coffin strapped to his back is ordered to "Kick their asses!" is a good game to us! *Gungrave: Overdose* is headed our way to deliver more visceral anime action. While it's no longer cel-shaded like the last game was, *Overdose* features three playable characters: Grave, Juji Kabane, and the best character ever, Rocket Billy RedCadillac, who uses a guitar as a weapon. Yes, he wails on his guitar to produce bolts of electricity (we prefer to think of it as rock energy) that zap his foes.

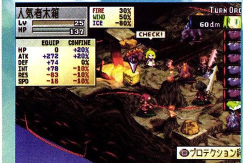


DEMO IMPORT FUN

If you pop in our disc and check out our import extra *Uoh*, you'll probably be confused because most of the demo is the tutorial, which is entirely in Japanese. From what we can gather, you use L1 to lock onto a fish, Square to eat said fish, X to swim forward or jump, and Circle to hit things. At one point, you might be stuck on an unbreakable fishing line—just jump out of the water and hit Square to break free. Finally, swim around and smack other fish before trying to eat them. That's all we can figure out, folks.



BRAVEST PHANTOMS OF ALL



Lv 25
HP 137

	EQUIP	CONFINE
HP	0	+20%
ATK	+272	+20%
DEF	+74	0%
INT	+78	-10%
RES	-83	-10%
SPD	-18	-10%

Hardcore strategy fans will appreciate Nippon Ichi bringing over *Phantom Brave*. *Disgaea* and *La Pucelle* were all fine and dandy, but *Phantom Brave* is Nippon Ichi's newest and most ambitious strategy-RPG. The game's odd yet innovative battle system depends on spirits possessing objects. Rather than having units enter battle, you have their spirits inhabit everyday objects scattered on the map—each spirit then takes on the properties of the object. So, you'd want a fighter to inhabit a rock for higher defense or a mage to inhabit a fish to gain water magic. You can also actually pick up and use objects, so on every map, if you can see it, it's either a potential item or a unit. It sounds totally weird and complicated, but it's pretty easy to play. Check out our official review next month.

JAPAN TOWN

THE VIEW FROM OVER THERE

ANDREW VESTAL teaches English in the land of our friends to the East. In his spare time, he makes fun of people who get suckered in by subpar LEs.

For Japan-minded gamers living in America, jealousy is a way of life. Week after week, enthusiast websites overflow with stories of games not coming for months—if ever. Sure, most decent games eventually cross the Pacific, but to the hardcore, the "experience"—the aura of software, boxes, manuals, and bonuses—is as important as the game itself. To gamers who covet what Japan has and they don't, there is no holier grail than the limited edition, or LE.

What's in a Japanese LE? Small figurines (usually of cute female characters), art books, and CDs are all common. Other popular tchotchkes are sticker sheets, pen cases, key chains, cell-phone straps, inexpensive watches, and trading cards.

A good LE is packed with cool extras that reflect the game and show that the developers thought about the fans. The *Rez* LE included a trance vibrator, a T-shirt, vibrating headphones, a wristband, eye drops, and *Rez* bandages. Hideo Kojima is known for his lavish LEs; *Zone of the Enders*, for example, had a humongous 150-page art book, a 50-minute anime DVD, and the soundtrack CD. The *Shin Megami Tensei: Nocturne* LE included an incense burner with multiple scents of colored incense—just the thing for summoning demons.

Cool as they sound, the popularity of LEs has waned in recent years. Why? Most LEs are huge; some come in boxes nearly two feet long. Retailers hate how they clog up their limited shelf space, and gamers' apartments have no place to store them. Also, almost all LEs eventually lose their value. An LE that a few short years ago sold new for $100 to $150 can now be had for $20 to $40. What sort of collector "invests" in that market? But the biggest problem is the LEs themselves. Once publishers learned that Japanese *otaku* would shell out cash regardless of an LE's quality, they jacked up the price and skimped on the quality of the goods. Plenty of lousy $50 LEs have shipped with a polyester pouch, a 10-minute soundtrack disc, eight trading cards, and a poorly painted figurine.

COOL AS THEY SOUND, THE POPULARITY OF LEs HAS WANED.

This "less for more" phenomenon has infected even top-tier games like *Xenosaga*. Though the LE for the first game is well respected and still valuable, the *Episode 2* LE is miserable. For ¥17,800 ($164), you get two KOS-MOS figures, a toy bike, and an art book. Since the game alone retails for ¥6,980 ($64), you're paying $100 for two figures, a vehicle, and a book. It doesn't take a degree in mathology to figure out what Namco's up to.

Worse, the figures are of astoundingly poor quality. Japanese gaming forums have exploded with Photoshops mocking the eerie, wild-eyed KOS-MOS. Broke fans aren't afraid to say exactly how they feel. One user speaks for many when he says, "It's garbage. It's industrial waste." Ouch.

So take heart, U.S. gamers. Sure, you may not get every LE that comes out in the Land of the Rising Sun. But you have something better: your money, and your pride. «

ANIMANIA

FREDDIE MERCURY + ROBOTS + GORILLAS = GOOD, CLEAN ANIME FUN

MOBILE SUIT UP

The long layoff since the release of the *Gundam OVA* series has resulted in a distressing deficiency of *Mobile Suit* on the American anime market, but that's about to change this fall. The first volume of *Gundam SEED* hits on August 10, while September will finally bring the *Gundam* fan's Holy Grail. After six years of rumor and speculation, *Zeta Gundam* will be available in America as a complete limited-edition box set.

The set packs in all 52 episodes of the second *Gundam* TV series, which features survivors from both sides of the One Year War banding together to fight the totalitarian forces of the new Earth government. The whole set is $200—a lot of money in just one shot, but not bad for more than 20 hours of absolutely classic mecha action. *SEED*, meanwhile, has become one of the best-received alternate-world *Gundam* series of the past decade. Though it's another riff on Earth-versus-the-colonists, the execution is a cut above the vapid *Gundam Wing*'s—check it out on the Cartoon Network now.

DEXTER, MEET ASTRO

Sony has locked and loaded plans for an *Astro Boy* movie, but that's not much of a surprise in itself. What's surprising is who the company has tapped to direct the flick—Genndy Tartakovsky, creator of *Dexter's Laboratory* and *Samurai Jack*. The Cartoon Network veteran has well and truly hit the big time, commanding a project that will combine live action, computer graphics, and advanced animatronic effects. No word yet on when it's due for release, but the finished product should be something worth seeing.

THUGS. LOTS OF THUGS

Project A-Kon featured a few licensing announcements that may be of interest to hopeless degenerates—Funimation has picked up the lolicon nightmare *Gunslinger Girl*; ADV has the saccharine horror of *Mermaid Melody Pitchi Pitchi Pitch*—but the news wasn't all bad. Chiefly, ADV will be bringing out *Sakigake!! Cromartie Koukou*, which follows the brilliant absurdist adventures of young Takashi Kamiyama at the delinquent-dominated Cromartie High School. The reason for the show's title isn't clear; why some of the school's leading students include an oil-drum-shaped robot, a talking gorilla, and Queen front man Freddie Mercury is even less clear. Go with the cheerfully demented flow and watch out for DVD release news.

SAMU-RIOT

More positive news on the licensing front from A-Kon and the Licensing International Show: Geneon has confirmed plans to bring out *Samurai Champloo*, while Bandai has confirmed the long-overdue American release of *Overman King-Gainer*. *Champloo*, the latest project from *Cowboy Bebop* director Shinichiro Watanabe, is a hip-hop-infused samurai action series. *King-Gainer*, meanwhile, is an impressive comeback for *Gundam* creator Yoshiyuki Tomino that features slick mecha action in the '80s superrobot tradition and a bizarre sense of humor that spawned the most beautiful OP sequence in recent memory.

BLOWING OFF STEAM

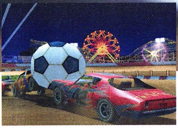
Offering further evidence to support the once-unlikely contention that *Steamboy* would see a theatrical release, the Japanese press reports that the film will be in American theaters this fall. The latest superhero action project from *Akira* director Katsuhiro Otomo, *Steamboy* was in production for years, and its budget set a record for the highest price tag for a Japanese animated film. But it will evidently make it to select Stateside markets in October, in time to follow *Spirited Away* into potential 2005 Academy Award consideration. «

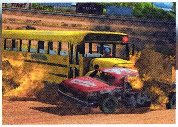
LOVE ANIME?
Then stop by 1UP.com and check out one of the dozens of clubs dedicated solely to anime—just think, you could be a member of WeaselsAnimeclub.1up.com, run by the delightful Mr. Weasel 699 himself.

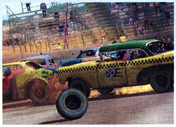
IN STORES SEPTEMBER

THE CARS ARE UGLY. THE RACES ARE UGLY. AND IF THERE WAS A GIRL WHO HANDED OUT TROPHIES, SHE'D BE UGLY TOO.

ATARI
TEST DRIVE







The only beauty you'll find in the new Test Drive series is in the crashes. Huge, gorgeous, stunning crashes. The kind you only dream about. Choose from 33 different vehicles, including a school bus and a hearse and 25 different disaster-inviting courses. Reckless driving. Tons of crashes. It's a beautiful thing.

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Test Drive
EVE OF DESTRUCTION

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Mild Lyrics
Mild Violence
Simulated Gambling

PlayStation.2

MONSTER
GAMES

XBOX

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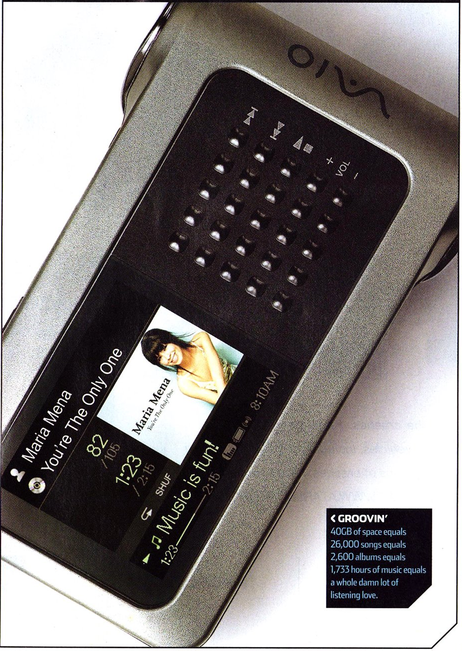
THE LIST

IPOD KILLER?

SONY VAIO POCKET

Apple is rumored to be launching a new iPod with a color screen later this year, but Sony has beaten the company to the punch with this 40GB media player. In addition to storing up to 26,000 songs in MP3, WMA, or ATRAC3 format (Sony's proprietary format), the device also stores digital photos that can be displayed on its 2.2-inch color screen. You can even sync your digital camera to the thing in order to archive photos. Expect to see it in stores any day now for $500.



‹ GROOVIN'
40GB of space equals 26,000 songs equals 2,600 albums equals 1,733 hours of music equals a whole damn lot of listening love.

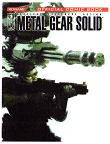
STREAM TUNES ANYWHERE

AIRPORT EXPRESS

Plug it in to a power outlet, connect it to any stereo in the house, and stream your MP3 collection by using the magic of Wi-Fi. This is exactly the kind of futuristic awesomeness that we were all promised would be in homes of the future when we were kids. The device itself is $129, and it is so simple to set up, you can either move a single device from stereo to stereo in your home or buy multiple units and manage each of them using a menu in iTunes on either your Mac or PC.

THE OFFICIAL COMIC BOOK

METAL GEAR SOLID



IDW will unleash the first issue of the official *Metal Gear* comic book in late September. Written by Kris Oprisko and illustrated by Ashley Wood, the new series is a retelling of Snake's story from the beginning of the PS1 game and features new background info on our favorite hero courtesy of Kojima himself. Check out www.idwpublishing.com if you want to know more.

NEW ANIMATED SERIES TOYS

BATMAN

Warner Bros. Animation is about to hit us with a new *Batman* animated TV show, and Mattel has eight new 5-inch figures, each with 10 points of articulation, along with a huge cubicle-filling Batcave action set (which we're told is 3 feet tall) and a new rocket-launching Batmobile. The figures will set you back $6.99 each, the Batmobile $19.99, and the Batcave $39.99.

MAGICAL CORDLESS HEADPHONES

BLUETAKE BT420 I-PHONO

We were wondering how long it would take before someone came up with a set of Bluetooth-enabled headphones, and Bluetake's pair look to be the very first on the market. Plug the dongle into your iPod or Walkman or whatever, turn on the phones, and enjoy six hours of cord-free prancing about in your own private little musical wonderland. The only catch? They cost a wallet-crushing $299.

SMARTER SMART PHONE

T-MOBILE SIDEKICK 2

Fans of the HipTop device previously available through T-Mobile will be excited to see that the Sidekick 2 is scheduled to hit stores any day now. This new unit is slimmer and sexier, and it has a nicer keyboard, a new color screen, and a camera that includes a flash. Expect to see it in stores before the end of the month for around the same price as the current color Sidekick.

THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

SAMSUNG DUOCAM SCD6040

If we were about to spend $900 on a video camera, this is the one we'd choose. Why? Because it's a kick-ass fully featured MiniDV cam, *and* it's a 4.13-megapixel digital SD camera with all the trimmings. Each camera has its own lens and its own screen, and the whole thing is squeezed into a classy and compact matte-black package. This is the future of cameras.

U.S. SPECIAL FORCES IN VIETNAM

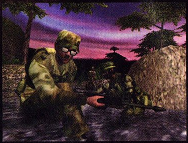
VIETCONG
PURPLE HAZE

Authentic 1960s soundtrack including music from Iggy Pop and the Stooges, Deep Purple, the Standells and more...

19 missions in the single player campaign - 17 of the best from the PC version and 2 new missions exclusive for the console!

Command an elite squad of Special Forces troops for maximum tactical strategy.

Utilize any means necessary to gain control of key enemy territory - gather intelligence, call in air strikes.



Start a quick fight as either a U.S. or Vietcong soldier and jump straight into the demilitarized zone!

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PlayStation®2 illusion softworks PTERODON COYOTE GATHERING

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
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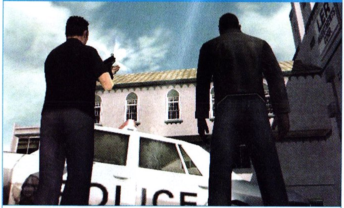
BY THE NUMBERS

IN ASSOCIATION WITH EB GAMES electronics boutique

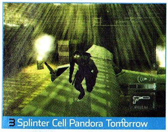
PS2 TOP 20 SALES

Favorite drivers of *OPM* staff members, in no particular order: Kit Carson, Dale Earnhardt, The Dukes of Hazzard, Corey Haim, The Bandit, Toonces the Driving Cat, Ponch, Steve McQueen, Large Marge.

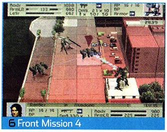


"Don't be silly—we don't drive the cars, we just shoot at them."

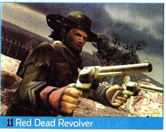
	Title (Publisher)	
1	DRIV3R (Atari)	●●●◐
2	Spider-Man 2 (Activision)	●●●◐
3	Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow (Ubisoft)	●●●●◐
4	Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (EA Games)	●●●●
5	Mega Man Anniversary Collection (Capcom)	●●●◐
6	Front Mission 4 (Square Enix)	●●●●
7	XIII (Ubisoft)	●●●◐
8	MVP Baseball 2004 (EA Sports)	●●●●◐
9	Fight Night 2004 (EA Sports)	●●●●
10	Shrek 2 (Activision)	●●●◐
11	Red Dead Revolver (Rockstar)	●●●●
12	NBA Ballers (Midway Sports)	●●●●
13	DDRMAX 2 (Konami)	●●●●
14	Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy (Midway)	●●●●◐
15	Showdown: Legends of Wrestling (Acclaim)	●◐
16	Samurai Warriors (Koei/EA)	●●●●
17	Champions of Norrath: Realms of EverQuest (SOE)	●●●●◐
18	Onimusha 3: Demon Siege (Capcom)	●●●●◐
19	NBA Street Vol. 2 (EA Sports Big)	🔴🔴🔴🔴🔴
20	Transformers (Atari)	●●●◐



3 Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow



6 Front Mission 4



11 Red Dead Revolver

14 Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy

Source: EB Games, June 2004. Numbers reflect the sales at EB and its affiliated outlets and don't include other retail outlets. That's probably why you'll never see *Deer Hunter* crack the top 10. Japan's top 10 and the top 10 rentals come from other sources. Game descriptions written by the *OPM* staff. Rev 'Em Up sources: Rekord Klub Saxonia, AP.

PS1 TOP 10 SALES

1	Final Fantasy VII	Square Enix
2	Final Fantasy Chronicles	Square Enix
3	Final Fantasy Anthology	Square Enix
4	Final Fantasy Origins	Square Enix
5	Final Fantasy VIII	Square Enix
6	Final Fantasy IX	Square Enix
7	Final Fantasy Tactics	Square Enix
8	Dragon Ball Z: Ultimate Battle 22	Atari
9	Dora the Explorer: Barn Buds	Jack of All Games
10	Chrono Cross	Square EA

JAPAN'S TOP 10 PS2 GAMES

1	Pachislot: Fist of the North Star	Sammy
2	J. League Pro Soccer Club '04	Sega
3	Xenosaga: Episode II	Namco
4	Grand Theft Auto: Vice City	Capcom
5	Super Robot Wars MX	Banpresto
6	Silent Hill 4	Konami
7	3-nen B-gumi Kinpachi-sensei	Chun Soft
8	Pachislot: Inoki Festival	Success
9	Sakurazaka Shobotai	Irem
10	Memories Off	KID

TOP 10 BLOCKBUSTER RENTALS

1	DRIV3R (PS2)	Atari
2	DRIV3R (XB)	Atari
3	Spider-Man 2 (PS2)	Activision
4	Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow (PS2)	Ubisoft
5	Spider-Man 2 (XB)	Activision
6	Red Dead Revolver (PS2)	Rockstar
7	Shadow Ops: Red Mercury (XB)	Atari
8	Showdown: Legends of Wrestling (PS2)	Acclaim
9	NBA Ballers (PS2)	Midway
10	Chronicles of Riddick (XB)	Vivendi Universal

TOP 10 SALES, ALL SYSTEMS

1	Full Spectrum Warrior (XB)	THQ
2	Chronicles of Riddick (XB)	Vivendi Universal
3	Zelda: The Four Swords (GC)	Nintendo
4	Spider-Man 2 (XB)	Activision
5	DRIV3R (PS2)	Atari
6	Spider-Man 2 (PS2)	Activision
7	DRIV3R (XB)	Atari
8	NES Zelda (GBA)	Nintendo
9	Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow (PS2)	Ubisoft
10	NES Mario (GBA)	Nintendo

TREND SPOTTER

All the animals popping up in games are starting to make us feel like we work in a zoo—especially since many of them show up embedded in a big pile of manure.

Catwoman

Spider-Man 2

A Dog's Life

Uoh

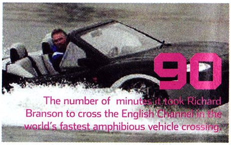
Leisure Suit Larry

REV 'EM UP

Baby, you can drive our car.

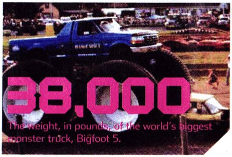
34

The most people ever crammed into a Volkswagen Beetle. Record set at Chelsea College in the U.K.



90

The number of minutes it took Richard Branson to cross the English Channel in the world's fastest amphibious vehicle crossing.



38,000

The weight, in pounds, of the world's biggest monster truck, Bigfoot 5.

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RUMBLE ARENA 2®

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- *More than 45 playable Digimon forms!*
- *Includes favorite Digimon from all 4 TV seasons.*
- *Defeat the bosses to unlock secret Digimon.*

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Cartoon Violence
Comic Mischief

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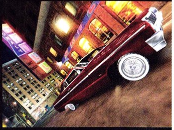
THE FAST AND FURIOUS FUTURE OF RACING GAMES, STARTING WITH EIGHT GAMES DUE THIS YEAR

This year is particularly significant for the future of racing games. An incredible number of products are coming to PS2 this holiday season, and there's been a dramatic change in what these games emphasize; we'll also be seeing the triumphant return of a number of key franchises. *Gran Turismo 4* will finally arrive after an achingly long wait, Electronic Arts is hitting us with a sequel to its shockingly successful *Need for Speed Underground* (which completely reinvented the aging franchise), and Rockstar is responding to the swelling ranks of the subgenre it helped create with the original *Midnight Club* with a game that takes the idea of modification in a completely new direction. These three heavyweights are joined by the latest in the 17-year-old *Test Drive* franchise; new kids on the tuner-culture block, *Juiced* and *Street Racing Syndicate*; Konami's challenger to *Gran Turismo*'s throne, *Enthusia*; and Criterion's incredible third game in the *Burnout* franchise. Although dramatically different in execution, all eight games are indicative of the changing attitudes publishers and developers have toward the genre. We gathered representatives from all of these titles to comment on the changing tastes of gamers and to talk about the future of racing.

In the past, at this time of year we'd be bracing ourselves for a deluge of Formula One, NASCAR, and other motorsport products with the latest date tacked onto the box. This year, there are hardly any, and instead we are met with a large number of games that simply celebrate the idea of racing fast cars. Why so many, though? "There are a lot of racing games released every year, and most of them are unremarkable," says Jay Panek, the producer of Rockstar San Diego's *Midnight Club 3: Dub Edition*. "I believe your average track-based racing game is relatively easy to develop. This year, there are a lot of street-racing games coming out, which has to do with the mainstreaming of

MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE BLING



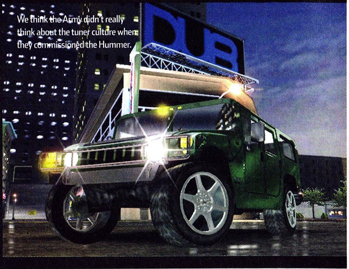
While other street-racing games are primarily about tuning import cars (frequently dismissed as "rice rockets" or "ricers"), the newest *Midnight Club* is aiming for a meatier market. With the help of *Dub* magazine, *Midnight Club 3* supplants (or at least complements) the speed-is-everything mentality with an eye toward luxury, flash, and style. More than 50 licensed SUVs, muscle cars, imports, and motorcycles will be nigh-infinitely customizable. Want to throw hydraulics on your Escalade? It's yours. How about a two-tone paint job for your chopper? Pick the colors to form a custom blend. You want spinning rims on your Hummer? Go for it. Dozens of real-life manufacturers have lent their products' likenesses to *MC3* to allow for a staggering variety of customization.

Once you customize your ride, you'll be able to take to the streets of Detroit, Atlanta, and San Diego to compete in dozens of different race styles. While these won't be map-perfect representations, they'll be close enough that anyone familiar with the layout of any of these cities can find their way around easily.

Watch yourself, though; even though you're driving licensed vehicles, each one has fully modeled damage. Yes, Rockstar has somehow managed to beat the auto manufacturers into submission, and now, even fancy-ass SUVs take damage to the body, glass, and undercarriage in a realistic fashion.

So, yes, you'll get to spend tons of time and money pimping out your ride—and then smashing it up real good. Sounds like a hit to us!

Pub. Rockstar **Dev.** Rockstar San Diego **Release** Fall



We think the Army didn't really think about the tuner culture when they commissioned the Hummer.

this culture. The original *Midnight Club* was the first street-racing game ever, and its success turned a lot of heads. Not long after, *The Fast and the Furious* came out and took the culture, at least a commercialized version of it, into places far beyond games."

"I agree that the mod games seem to have gotten a big push because of the success of *The Fast and the Furious* movies," says James Dima, the associate producer of Acclaim's *Juiced*. "But there are a lot of others coming out too, though. Cars have become an extension of people's personalities, just like clothes and music—so it's a relevant way for people to express themselves and communicate with others."

Owen Justice, the producer of Monster Games' *Test Drive: Eve of Destruction* has a different attitude. "Are there more this year than last?" he asks. "Or the year before? It could be there are; I'm just not sure that this year marks a major departure. Driving has always been big. It is a natural genre for consoles."

"It's business," confesses Chris Downend, the executive producer of Namco's *SRS: Street Racing Syndicate*. "It's tough to get approval on projects with budgets in the millions these days. Everyone is looking for ways to mitigate risks, so it's safer to go after a proven genre, like racing. If you can add some incremental innovations to get the game over the top, you have a winner."

Customization and the associated street-racing scene certainly appear to be something that everyone agrees has been a major catalyst for game design. "It has become the dominant expression of car culture in the United States," says Dan Houser, the vice president of creative at Rockstar. "Not only is car racing something videogames can now do in a more visceral and compelling way than movies, but so is customization—people can create the car of their dreams, down to the tiniest details. Of course, people expect certain things to be done in games; they will no longer accept bad production values or the misrepresentation of subcultures. This is something we have always taken very seriously at Rockstar. So, for us to enter an arena, we will always try to find the right people to work with—people who are game fans and have their own expertise. For car customization, *Dub* magazine are the godfathers, and they also understand games, so they are proving to be great people to work with."

"To be clear, the *Dub* culture and the tuner culture are two very different things," explains Panek. "I think tuner culture, with modified Mitsubishis, Hondas, and the like, has become a very common element in racing games these days. This is not a criticism; the tuner culture is still hot, and we were sure to incorporate this into *Midnight Club 3: Dub Edition*. But the high-end, flashy *Dub* culture is not present in modern racing games. Well, not yet anyway. The truth is that racing games have not caught up with the cutting-edge real-life automotive subculture, which is all about the customization you see in *Dub* magazine."

"Now that online racing is becoming a standard," Acclaim's Dima explains, "having this high degree of customization is really important. Players need to have the ability to personalize their rides to the fullest extent—their cars are what represent them online."

As games have embraced the tuning culture, we've also found that we're seeing a step away from realism and hardcore simulation aspects toward a looser, more arcade-style experience. Although *Need for Speed Underground* features real cars and aftermarket parts, a lot of its success can be attributed to the nature of its gameplay. "I think people want to do things in videogames that they can't do in real life," Rockstar's Panek declares. "Some racing games are very impressive simulations, but they can feel boring and slow to those who are not serious auto enthusiasts. Plus, the learning curve is usually severe. People want to get their hands on a racing game and have fun and the freedom to do what they want. Track-based, hyperrealistic racing games certainly have their niche, but they are limiting."

"Hmm, I can't say I agree with that," says Alex Ward, the director of design at Criterion Games. "Most games coming out tend to feature real cars and thus lean toward more of a simulation feel, rather than a pure pick-up-and-play arcade vibe. When we started making the first *Burnout* a few years back, we had practically every door in the industry slammed in our faces. Everyone was telling us, 'You can't make an arcade game; arcade driving is a no-no, forget it.' But we were passionate about making a game with a decent drift in there. We wanted to bring back the feeling of *OutRun* or *Sega Rally*."

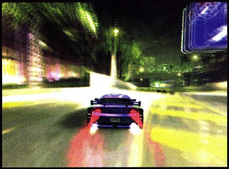
"If there has been a move toward arcade style, I think it was done not because it was a goal in and of itself, but rather to give the player

continued on page 76

NINE THINGS ABOUT THE ROAD AHEAD

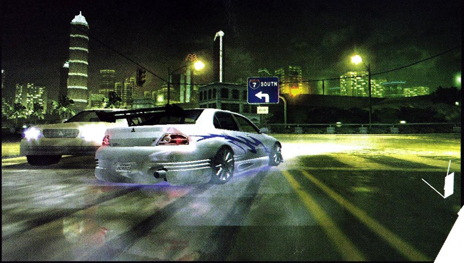
1. Tuner culture has been really important for the evolution of racing games because of the way it allows players to express themselves.
2. In terms of cultural focus and features, *Need for Speed Underground* was an enormously powerful influence on the way racing games changed in the past year.
3. *Midnight Club* did all that stuff first.
4. *Gran Turismo 4* is probably about as far as you can expect anyone to push things on PlayStation 2.
5. Open environments are the future.
6. Online play, too.
7. We're going to see photo-realistic racing games on PS3.
8. Kazunori Yamauchi really likes his physics calculations.
9. The PSP version of *GT4* will probably be just like the PS2 version.

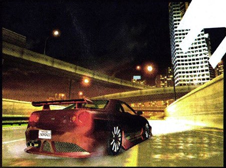
> **"TRACK-BASED, HYPERREALISTIC RACING GAMES CERTAINLY HAVE THEIR NICHE, BUT ARE LIMITING."**
>
> **—JAY PANEK, ROCKSTAR SAN DIEGO**

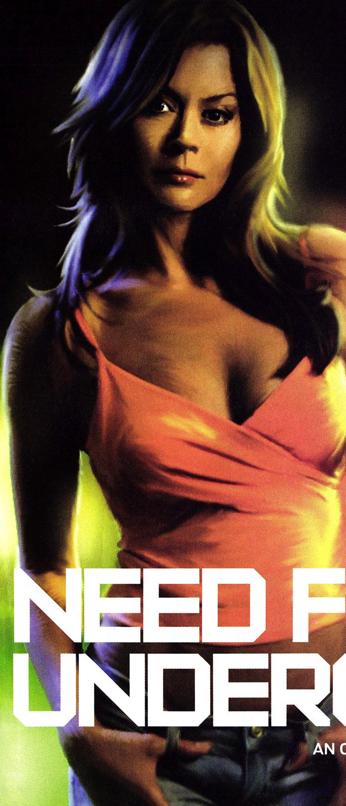


Underground 2 now has a real-live girl on the cover. Gentlemen, start your engines for Brooke Burke, the most searched-for lady on the Interweb.

Who knew it was possible? The graphics in *Underground 2* look even *better* than last time.







Last year's big kahuna faces some stiff competition this year, but EA Canada certainly seems to have plenty of tricks up its sleeve. The big hook this year is the open city, which, although mocked by Rockstar as something "we did years ago," is still a huge deal in terms of the way the game hangs together. One of *Underground*'s problems was the pacing, as well as the fact that you had to race through every single event in order to open up all the goodies. *Underground 2* lets you off the hook somewhat, and now you can cruise around the gigantic city and simply jump into events you like. Don't enjoy drifting? Then steer clear of drift events and stick to the other six event types. There are lots of opportunities for 1-on-1 races, too. You can challenge other drivers cruising around and beat them simply by getting a set distance in front of them, or check your pager for scheduled races that are set up by your ever-broadening circle of contacts.

We didn't think the game could improve much graphically, but shockingly, the team has managed to squeeze a whole bunch of new effects out of the PS2. Some of the simplest are the most effective, with one of our favorites being the reflecting lane markers that help draw attention to the race route. It's a very simple device, but it is remarkably effective and adds further to the whole night-driving experience.

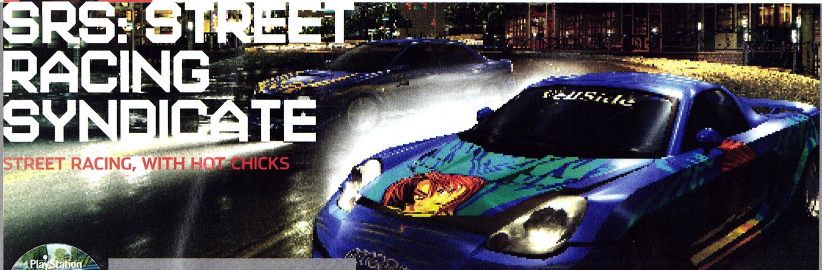
Pub. EA Games **Dev.** EA Canada **Release** November

NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2

AN OPEN CITY, MORE CARS, MORE EVENTS...AND BROOKE BURKE

SRS: STREET RACING SYNDICATE

STREET RACING, WITH HOT CHICKS



We sure love shiny cars here! Especially ones with crazy decals on them! Like a unicorn, for example!

PlayStation

WATCH THE VIDEO

SRS: STREET RACING SYNDICATE
Check out the video of Namco's upcoming street racer on our DVD!

GARAGE
Select

What does it take to set your street-racing game apart from the rest of the pack? According to Eutechnyx, the answer is lots of hot chicks.

It's all about your rep in *SRS*. The more races you win and fancy driving you pull off, the more cuties—18 in all—come headed your way. They're not just going to throw themselves at you, though—first you have to win them over by living up to a challenge they present you with (race through the markers in time, hit some big air, etc.). Success adds the hottie to your "girlfriend collection" (we kid you not), where, after learning their "interests" and measurements, you can then see these real-life import-mag models strut their scantily clad stuff in music videos.

As far as the rest of the game is concerned, expect much of your typical street-racing and customization fare. Progress through free-roaming versions of Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Miami, competing in organized circuits or against any punk with the cajones to challenge you (if you don't feel like driving to a destination, you can even just "jump" there). You've got several cars from seven manufacturers available, as well as lots of customization for each.

SRS further distinguishes itself with some awesome online features. Just imagine taking your souped-up Eclipse online—one you've spent hours modifying—but then you see another dude with an awesomely customized RX-7...and you want it. You can put your Mitsubishi up against his Mazda—winner takes all. But don't think you'll get off easy if you lose. Your car is totally stripped away from your memory card, even for single-player mode. In other words, wager with caution.

Pub. Namco **Dev.** Eutechnyx **Release** September

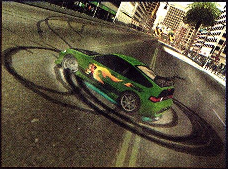
JUICED

JUICE UP YOUR RIDE

***Juiced*'s boast** that there are more than 7.2 trillion cars—which works out to 1,200 cars for every person currently alive—is a tall one. Then again, considering the large number of aftermarket parts, in addition to three distinct layers of paint (each layer has an individual coat, and all three coats blend into some weird übercolor), there's no chance of anyone driving the same car as you. You can also race online for pink slips; the winner gets a copy of the loser's car transferred to his memory card.

Juiced features unique team-based gameplay. As you accrue respect, you start assembling a racing crew. If you don't have the money or equipment to participate in a race, just send a goon in your spot. His win or loss still affects you, so it's a small gamble to send a substitute; but if you and the three guys you sent to individual races all win, that's quadruple the earnings. Or have your racing buddies help you out in cooperative races. While you and your buds compete simultaneously with some other cars, you can order them to race down a specific path or even block off your opponents for you. You can even start your own races to attract rivals or possible chums to your corner of the city.

Pub. Acclaim **Dev.** Juice Games **Release** September



CALCULATIONS
High color depth is typically defined as 65,535 colors. So 65,535 to the third power is more like 700 trillion color combos!

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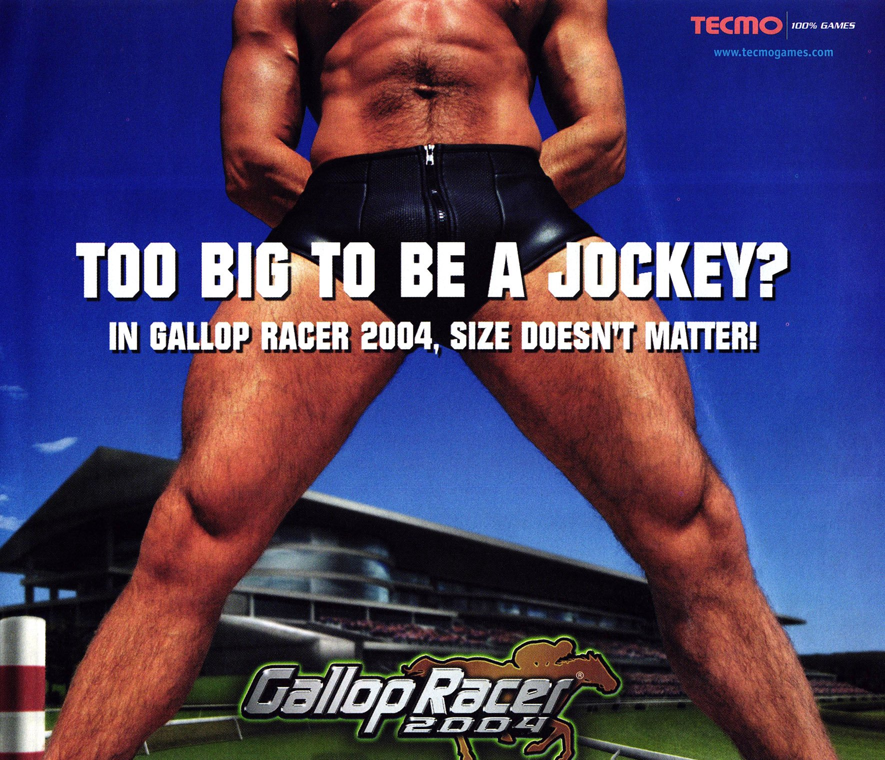

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Advanced camera mechanics!

Earn gold and use it to customize your environment!

Ride the perfect race for the Big Revolution!

RATING PENDING
RP
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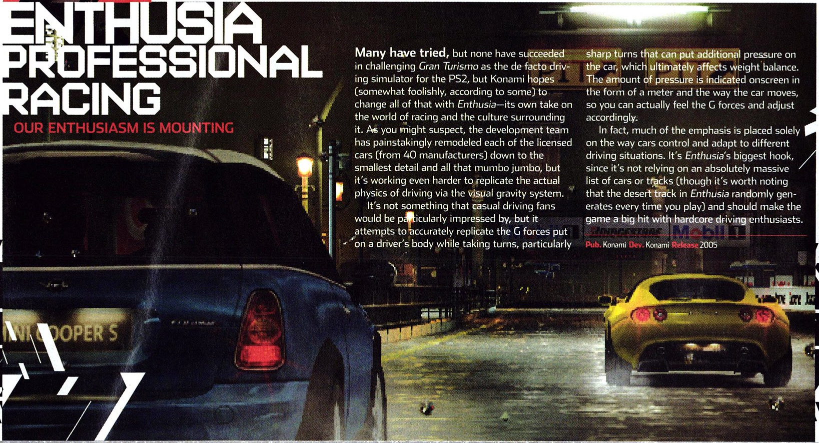
PlayStation®2

ENTHUSIA PROFESSIONAL RACING

OUR ENTHUSIASM IS MOUNTING



Many have tried, but none have succeeded in challenging *Gran Turismo* as the de facto driving simulator for the PS2, but Konami hopes (somewhat foolishly, according to some) to change all of that with *Enthusia*—its own take on the world of racing and the culture surrounding it. As you might suspect, the development team has painstakingly remodeled each of the licensed cars (from 40 manufacturers) down to the smallest detail and all that mumbo jumbo, but it's working even harder to replicate the actual physics of driving via the visual gravity system.

It's not something that casual driving fans would be particularly impressed by, but it attempts to accurately replicate the G forces put on a driver's body while taking turns, particularly sharp turns that can put additional pressure on the car, which ultimately affects weight balance. The amount of pressure is indicated onscreen in the form of a meter and the way the car moves, so you can actually feel the G forces and adjust accordingly.

In fact, much of the emphasis is placed solely on the way cars control and adapt to different driving situations. It's *Enthusia*'s biggest hook, since it's not relying on an absolutely massive list of cars or tracks (though it's worth noting that the desert track in *Enthusia* randomly generates every time you play) and should make the game a big hit with hardcore driving enthusiasts.

Pub. Konami **Dev.** Konami **Release** 2005

continued from page 72

a greater sensation of speed," Monster's Justice explains. "Why do I say this? Well, how do we make players feel like they are going faster? One way is to put them in faster cars, another is to have the tracks be narrower or have a lot of objects that the player must drive very close to. These things all increase the sensation of speed. However, they also make the course more difficult to drive. So, how do you keep the game easy but still have it move fast? You make the cars supereasy to control, and voilà, arcade mode rears its head!"

"I think the short answer is *Gran Turismo*," Namco's Downend admits. "It's the king of realism and simulation. It's bad business to go head-to-head against a dominant first-party title. The money, resources, and selling power that they can bring to bear on the game sets a very high standard. There is room for additional sim-racing games, but to succeed, they need a license or a venue that sets them apart—NASCAR or World Rally Championship or Formula One or street racing. On top of that, simulation tends to be a narrow area that restricts creativity. In contrast, arcade-racing action offers the freedom to stretch reality, offer innovative gameplay features, and create a subgenre that you can dominate."

"Simulation racing games require players to grasp the complex physics of cars as well as have a great knowledge of sport driving," explains Manabu Akita, the producer of Konami's *Enthusia*. "I believe there are too many racing games that are trying to be all things to all people. What game fans seem to want is a unique and fun experience that can occur only in a videogame world."

Is *Gran Turismo* guilty of trying to be "all things to all people"? We assume that this is what Akita is too polite to say outright. Could it be argued that perhaps this time, Yamauchi and his team are being too grand in their plans for the franchise?

"Boy, do I have a love-hate relationship with the *GT* series," Monster's Justice admits. "The marketing people at Sony might try to label *GT4* as the 'everything' car game, but I don't think the developers see it as that. To me, *GT4* is a car-enthusiast game. It is about allowing people to live out the fantasy of driving real cars in fantastic places. It's not a tuner car game; it's not a 'drive on real streets' game or even a 'driving as a sport' game. For example, if you are into rally as a sport, *GT4* isn't going to satisfy you. It's missing too many of the aspects of the sport: long stage events with time adding up, real courses, real drivers, real teams, etc. Do I think that *GT4* gives gamers a great car-enthusiast game? Heck yes!"

"A game like *GT* can be very daunting to casual racing fans," Acclaim's Dima interjects. "In the past *GT* games, you had to do a lot of 'work' before getting to the fun stuff. And once you did get to the faster cars, there were still a lot of cumbersome races to deal with. Car aficionados drool over all that stuff, but a lot of casual gamers dismiss it for being *too real*."

"I'm actually a huge *GT* fan, so I disagree that it's too grand," says Criterion's Ward. "One of the Criterion designers, Paul Glancey, has an interesting line on this, though. He states that *GT* is a great game if you love cars and you love videogames. If you're a car nut but don't play too many videogames, then you'll probably struggle with the main work of *GT*. Conversely, if you're a huge gamer but not too into cars, you'll struggle because when it comes down to the details of adjusting gear ratios and other such nonsense, you'll probably just switch it off."

"*GT4* is going the only way it can to advance the game and offer something compelling to the player at the end-of-life of a hardware platform," Namco's Downend adds. "They have squeezed every bit of realism out the current hardware, so they are forced to broaden the game into a 'soup to nuts' selection of realistic racing venues. It is an immensely expensive proposition that only a first-party game can justify economically. It's the type of platform-exclusive game that drives hardware sales, and hence, that can help justify the cost. But the player is the winner in this equation."

If *Gran Turismo 4* is the ultimate expression of what the current hardware can offer, what's next? What can we possibly expect that will address the title of this story—what is "the road ahead" for racing games? "That's really the million dollar question, isn't it?" asks *Need for*

> **"I BELIEVE THERE ARE TOO MANY RACING GAMES THAT TRY TO BE ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE."**
>
> **—MANABU AKITA, KONAMI**

WHO WE TALKED TO

Manabu Akita, producer, Konami – *Enthusia*

James Dima, associate producer, Acclaim – *Juiced*

Chris Downend, executive producer, Namco – *SRS: Street Racing Syndicate*

Dan Houser, vice president of creative, Rockstar Games – *Midnight Club 3: Dub Edition*

Owen Justice, producer, Monster Games – *Test Drive: Eve of Destruction*

Chuck Osieja, producer, EA Canada – *Need for Speed Underground 2*

Jay Panek, producer, Rockstar San Diego – *Midnight Club 3: Dub Edition*

Alex Ward, director of design, Criterion Games – *Burnout 3*

Kazunori Yamauchi, president, Polyphony Digital – *Gran Turismo 4*

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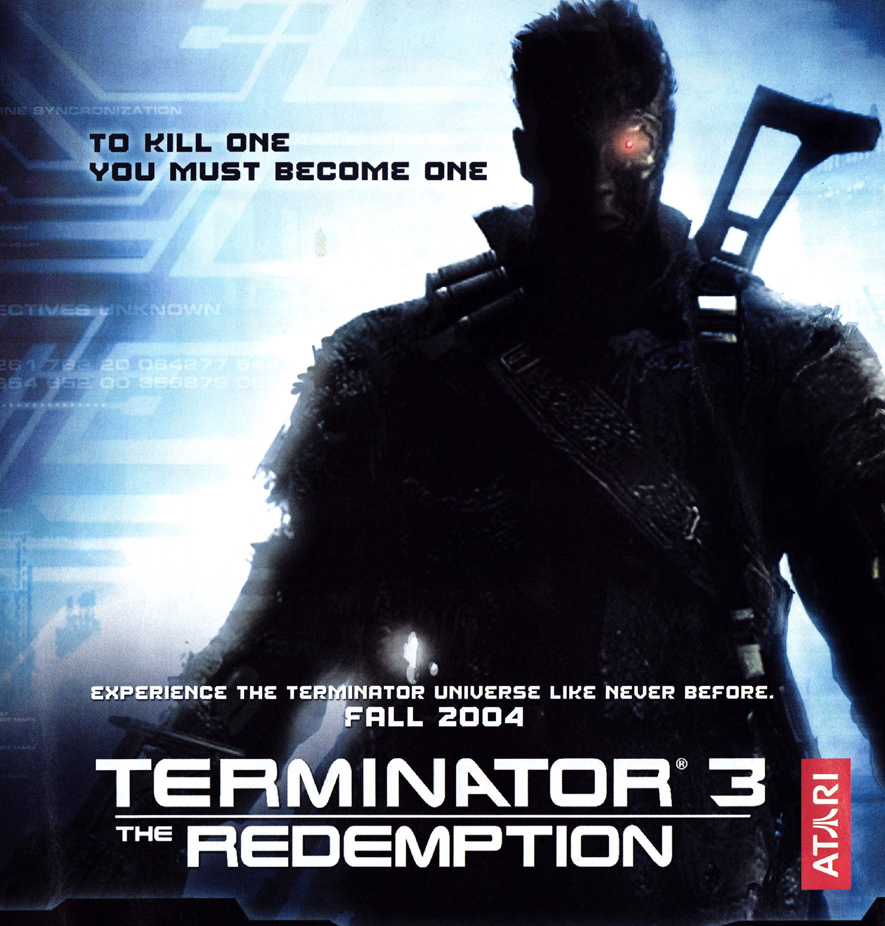

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BURNOUT 3 TAKEDOWN

CRASH AND BURN, BABY

No one who's sat down at the helm of a racing game can deny that whatever your feeling about the genre as a whole, it's hella fun to drive fast. Sadly, a lack of skill keeps many of us from spending much time on the road.

Enter *Burnout 3: Takedown*.

It's not that *B3* doesn't require skill—it does. But if your driving abilities happen to highlight your skill at running into things, then you have finally found your racing game. *B3*'s physics are more, well, forgiving than those in many other racing games, plus the game actually encourages reckless driving, awarding bonus points for risky behavior and opponent takedowns. Get a taste of the racing with the sample lap on this month's demo disc. Try sideswiping the other racers for an increase of the amount of boost in your boost meter, but watch out—if they hit you first, then you lose your boost to them.

As fun as the demo is, however, it doesn't come close to touching our favorite mode, crash mode, in which the entire goal is to create as expensive of a crash as possible. Since the sequence of cars in each scenario is the same every time, we've found it requires a surprising amount of strategy. Which gets better results: catching the edge of the streetcar so that it blocks as many lanes of traffic as possible or broadsiding the oil tanker in the hopes that it will explode? Add in power-ups that offer speed boosts, score multipliers, and the oh-so-upsetting heartbreaker (which automatically halves your score), and you've opened up hours of striving for that perfectly horrible accident. Believe us, we're talking from experience. The best part? There are 100 different crash scenarios, all of which can be played either solo, cooperatively, or competitively.

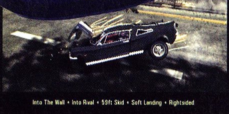
Pub. EA Games **Dev.** Criterion Games **Release** September

PlayStation
Issue 84

PLAY THE DEMO

BURNOUT 3

See what Alex Ward was talking about with this return to the arcade-racing principles of games like *OutRun*. *Burnout 3* is seriously fast, and seriously fun. Play it now!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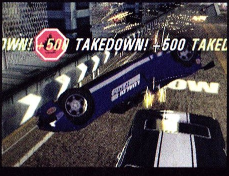
CRASHBREAKER 5



CRASH BREAKER

Our current crash record score is 1.97 million dollars worth of damage, achieved by Monsieur Joe Rybicki.

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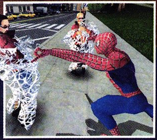

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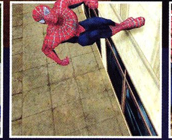

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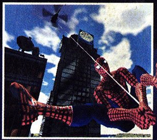

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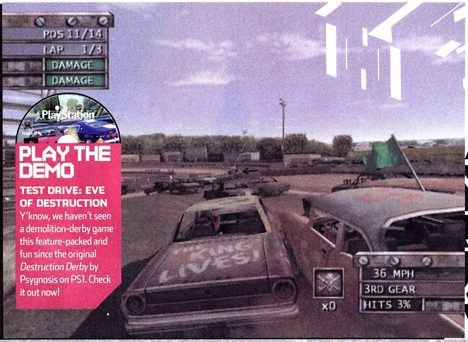
TEST DRIVE: EVE OF DESTRUCTION

OLD GLORY WITH NEW POLISH

Most people don't realize that *Test Drive* is the oldest and most diversified racing series to date. The original debuted way back in 1987, and since then, more than 38 versions of *Test Drive* have been released on varying platforms ranging from the Amiga to the PS2. While the core of the series is focused on standard racing, it branched out into other areas, including off-road, rally racing, and now, rock-em-sock-em racing.

Of course, no game with the word "destruction" in the title would be complete without a demolition derby; fortunately, one of *EOD*'s many modes lets you smash 14 other cars to pieces. But really, anything that involves metal striking even more metal at a high rate of speed is fine by us.

Pub. Atari **Dev.** Monster Games **Release** September



PLAY THE DEMO

TEST DRIVE: EVE OF DESTRUCTION
Y'know, we haven't seen a demolition-derby game this feature-packed and fun since the original *Destruction Derby* by Psygnosis on PS1. Check it out now!

continued from page 76

Speed Underground 2 producer Chuck Osieja. "I think that games like *Underground* and *Gran Turismo* have proven that players really want the ability to customize their racing experience. Whether it is with a wide selection, visuals, and performance, like in *Underground*, or with a wide variety of cars, like in *GT*, I think that's the cost of entry now. As a player, you need to be able to express yourself and your personality through the car you're driving or through what you've done to it. Unless it's a pure arcade experience, I think that any time you're asking a player to invest significant time, you need to give them enough choices to really personalize their game. The biggest problem that I see is a lack of creativity. It's rare that I pick up a mag and see a racing game and say, 'I can't wait to get my hands on that.' There is way too much 'me too' in the industry, and consumers are too smart to fall for it. Look at all of the *GT* clones that shipped in the last few years. They didn't even try to do anything different. We're seeing the same thing now with *Underground*. We knew it was going to happen, but here come the 'street-racing games with rain-slicked roads.' Whoo-hoo, I can't wait for that. As a gamer, I play as much as I can, and I think that my tastes are as discriminating as anyone's. I've got only so much time to dedicate to my gaming, so I want my experience to either be tried-and-true with a brand that I know consistently delivers, or I want it to be something new and fresh that challenges my skills. I want to get my $50 worth every time."

"Each new hardware introduction brings racing one step closer to modeling real life," Namco's Downend tells us. "Photo-realistic, and I mean *really* photo-realistic rendering is right there on the horizon with the next systems. Realistic crashes and crash damage are there, too—limited only by what the auto manufacturers will allow us to do with their cars. For the fanatical player, true return-to-center steering is coming, and all of this will give you the closest possible real-life simulation. Anyone that thinks they are getting a true simulation of driving a car in a videogame with a DualShock has clearly not seen the inside of a real car. Free-roaming cities that allow you to drive anywhere are here already and will become a standard feature from now on, even though racing is all about a single linear track and finding the racing line. Every game will need a free-roam mode to be competitive. Also, I think we have to expect deep and broad customization and tuning options. Living and breathing city streets dense with pedestrians, cars, and traffic are right around the corner. It's all stuff we've seen already, but it will be better. You can expect more of everything. It's a formula that has worked for 20 years, and it will keep working as long as cars remain part of our lives and a source of power and freedom for every teenager."

"The future of racing games is going to reflect what gamers want now," says Rockstar's Panek. "The fundamental desire is for blazing speed and total control, with as much freedom and ability to personalize your ride as possible. Of course, the best racing is when you are competing against real people, so a massive online experience is an area where a lot of ideas will evolve."

The future is something that *Gran Turismo*'s creator, Kazunori Yamauchi, is always keen to discuss. "Of course, in the immediate future I would hope to release *GT4* on PSP as soon as possible," he jokes. "But I really want to be able to produce a full-spec version of the game. What I don't want to do is remove features to fit it onto a handheld, so that's first on my list." Beyond this goal, he's also interested in really getting into the nitty-gritty of making a car game. "Let's take the category of car physics," he muses. "Currently in *GT4* on the PS2, the calculations for car physics are done 60 times a second, the same as the framerate. But with the next generation of hardware and its higher specifications, we think this could change to 300 times per second or even 600 times per second. This will allow us to model details about the way a car behaves in a much more realistic way than we can right now, and the possibilities it offers are endless.

"Another aspect to consider is the graphics," he beams. "For *Gran Turismo 4*, look at them...they're nice, they're very pretty...*for a game*. With the next-generation hardware, the target will obviously be to bring that to another stage where it will be much prettier than reality." Huh? "Take the environment and atmosphere seen in the Grand Canyon course, for example," he smiles. "There are times when you can see the same scenery with perfect lighting, like a beautiful sunset, and maybe only once in a hundred years do you see something like that. We have the advantage of being able to provide that beauty in a virtual world, and that goes beyond reality. I want to re-create a very beautiful atmosphere with all of the advantages of next-generation technology."

It would appear that the future of racing games is more of everything we have now. The apparent power of the upcoming PlayStation 3 hardware will allow designers to model things in greater detail and present them in near-as-dammit photo-realistic detail. We'll also see the genre move down the road that *Need for Speed*, *SRS*, and *Midnight Club* are already taking us with open environments, enormously thorough customization options, and plenty of freedom in an online environment. Never has the expression "bigger, better, faster, more!" been more appropriate for the development of a genre. «

> **"IT'S A FORMULA THAT HAS WORKED FOR 20 YEARS, AND IT WILL KEEP WORKING."**
>
> **—CHRIS DOWNEND, NAMCO**

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT RACING GAMES OF ALL TIME

Pole Position (arcade) 1982
"For many of us, when you say 'first driving game,' this is what we think of," says Monster's Owen Justice.

OutRun (arcade) 1986
For many, it's still the definitive arcade racing game. Cool graphics and a bright red Ferrari Testarossa.

Test Drive (PC) 1987
The first computer game to feature licensed cars.

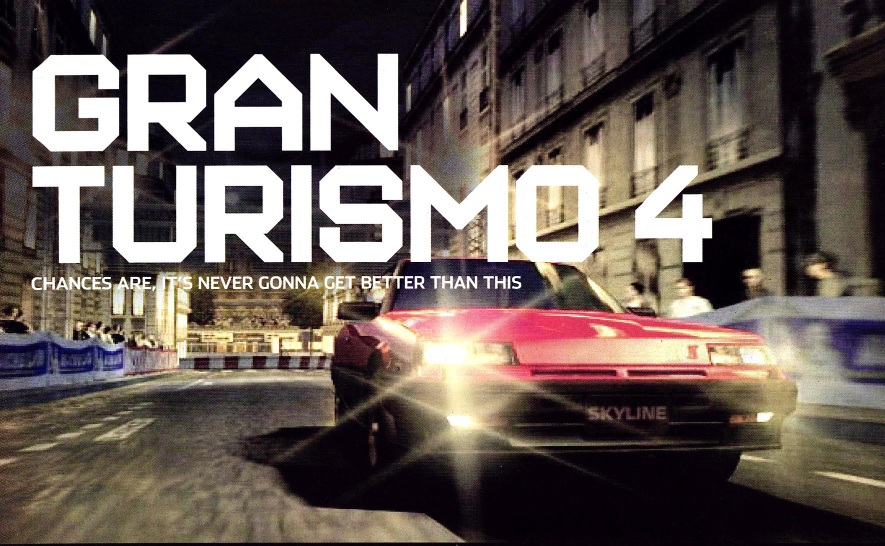
Hard Drivin' (arcade) 1988
One of the first true 3D games, this was the first driving game that aimed to be a vehicle simulator.

Need for Speed (3DO) 1994
The blueprint for the modern console racing game with licensed cars and multiple tracks.

Sega Rally (arcade) 1995
Forever changed the way we thought about how driving games control.

Gran Turismo (PS1) 1997
Yamauchi's classic is one of the most significant console games of all time.

Midnight Club (PS2) 2000
Rockstar's PS2 launch title was the first game to really embrace modern street-racing culture.



GRAN TURISMO 4

CHANCES ARE, IT'S NEVER GONNA GET BETTER THAN THIS

It looks like *Gran Turismo 4* is now on track for an early December release; a time window that we are told is absotively, posilutely going to be stuck to. There's no way whatsoever that the game is going to slip into next year—*this is it, kids.* So with a little more than four months to go, it continues to surprise us just how much Yamauchi and his team *haven't* revealed about the game. What we do know is that this is the game to beat, and all future racing games will no doubt be judged against it.

The Paris screens we have here are all new and appropriately exclusive, and we've also learned that the Las Vegas Strip (which you an see in the exclusive new screens over there on the right) will appear in the game as a drag strip, which is one of the coolest things we've heard in a long while (hey, we don't get out much). Details of the much-rumored downloadable content are still unconfirmed (we've heard about as much as you have; possibly tracks at some point, almost certainly cars, but no one knows when), and although Yamauchi has acknowledged an interest in aftermarket mods, we still haven't seen a confirmed supplier list.

Why the lack of information? Sounds like it's all down to the licenses being signed here in the United States. At some point in the not-too-distant future, there's going to be a spectacular explosion of information about the game, including a final car list (and judging from these screens, the crappy sedan segment is to be more than ably represented) and a mods list, as well as confirmation on all 100 tracks.

In the meantime, check out how good the whole thing looks on our DVD this month.

Pub. SCEA **Dev.** Polyphony Digital **Release** December

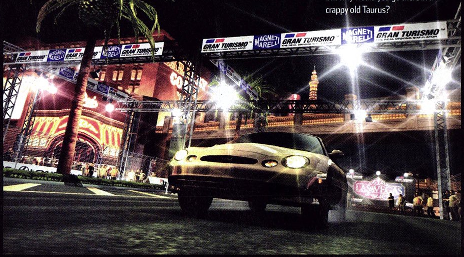
PlayStation

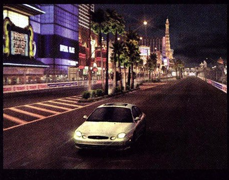
WATCH THE VIDEO

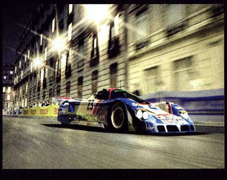
GRAN TURISMO 4

Every month between now and when the game comes out, we'll have exclusive footage on our DVD.

These exclusive new shots of the Las Vegas drag strip have us giddy, but why would you go there in a crappy old Taurus?







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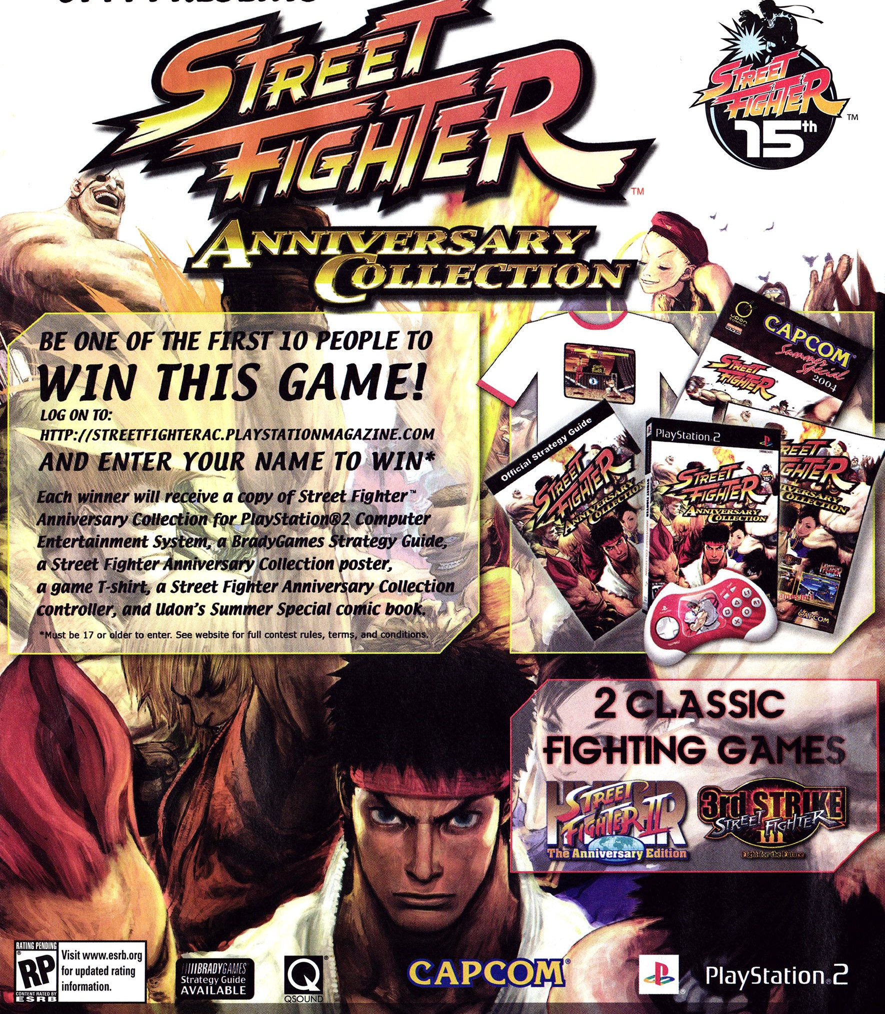
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REVIEWS

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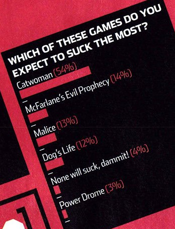
WHICH OF THESE GAMES DO YOU EXPECT TO SUCK THE MOST?



[●●●●●]

RATING KEY

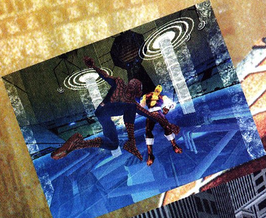
Octagons. Stomps. Ocs. Blargs. Call our rating symbols what you will—just know that any game that receives five of 'em is something truly special that deserves a spot in your collection. On the other hand, a 2.5 is merely mediocre. And a 0.5? Well...at least they're fun to rip apart.

OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE
GAME OF THE MONTH

ESPN NFL 2K5

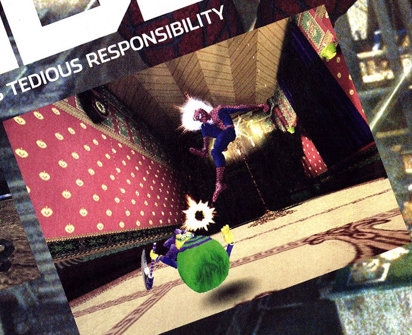
MADDEN'S GOT SOME COMPETITION

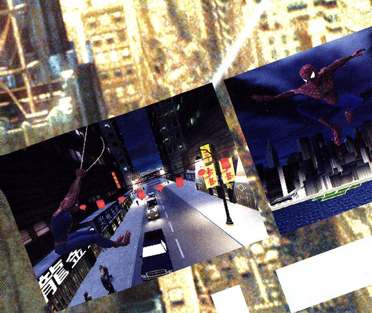
What a crappy month for review games. Yeah, it did have its bright spots—especially in *ESPN NFL 2K5*, *Star Ocean: Till the End of Time*, *Spider-Man 2*, and *Street Fighter Anniversary Collection*—but this is easily the worst overall batch of games in recent months, and it ranks right up there with the worst in OPM history. Oh well. At least bad reviews make for an entertaining read.



SPIDER-M

WITH GREAT POWER COMES TEDIOUS RESPONSIBILITY





THE RACE IS ON Probably more than 75 percent of your goals in *Spider-Man 2* involve getting from one place to another within a certain amount of time. In other words, it's largely an opponent-free racing game, only it replaces driving a car with webslinging through New York City.

Great videogames tend to share one thing in common: an unforgettable core gameplay mechanic around which the rest of the game is entirely built. Sneaking up to break a neck in *Metal Gear Solid*. A Musou attack in *Dynasty Warriors*. Gobbling a ghost in *Pac-Man*. That sort of thing. *Spider-Man 2*'s unforgettable core gameplay mechanic—webslinging—rivals that of anything you've ever played before. Trouble is, unlike the other games listed above (and pretty much any other classic), *Spidey 2* fails to deliver beyond this feature, resulting in a slightly messy game that doesn't feel entirely complete.

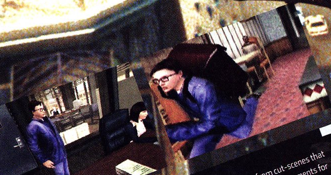
Webslinging has always served as the backbone of Spider-Man games, ever since the wallcrawler's PlayStation debut in 2000, but Treyarch really, truly nails it here. For starters, there's no reason to suspend your disbelief about your webs sticking to things above you even when you're atop the Chrysler Building—if there's nothing to latch to, you're not webbing on anything. To go one step further, a new physics engine ensures that wherever your webs do land, they're swinging you in the most realistic direction. Throw in speed-up and superhigh-jump abilities, and you're in for a wild ride. I've never experienced a game that makes you feel both out of control and totally in control at the same time. Spidey 2 is a veritable webslinging simulator, and Spider-Man himself would probably attest to its accuracy (well, if he weren't a fictional character, anyway).

And you can do this all across Manhattan. Just like in *Grand Theft Auto*, the whole city is yours for the slinging at any time in the game. And while New York City in *Spidey 2* is no London in *The Getaway*, expect a very sold representation including most of the Big Apple's major landmarks, from Times Square to Lady Liberty. And nothing—absolutely *nothing*—beats free-fallin' off the Empire State Building (eat your heart out, Tom Petty!), only to whip out a web at the last second and save yourself from going splat.

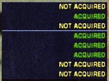
But alas, **the time it must have taken to perfect such wonderful webslinging seems to have interfered** with Treyarch's focus for the actual composition of the game. The rest of the webhead's chores—you know, all that crime fighting and being a hero stuff—just don't even come close to living up to the greatness of swinging through the town.

As cool as having the entire city at your whim may be, it simultaneously contributes largely to where *Spidey 2* fails. Activision proudly points out that part of being Spider-Man involves stumbling upon crimes conducted by common thugs. It's a good idea in theory—it just gets *way* too repetitive, and you're beating the crap out of punks with a shoddy combat system. Fighting just doesn't feel very fluid, and it simply never feels very fun.

I know New York City isn't the safest



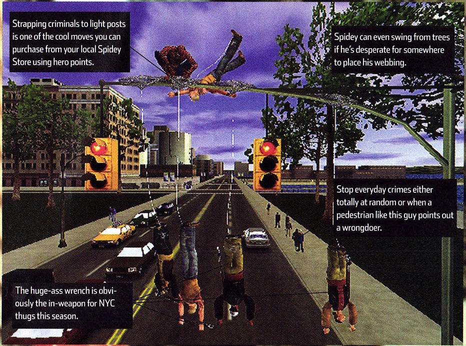
BEING PETER PARKER You can't make a living by being Spider-Man all the time. Aside from cut-scenes that move the story along, you can also be Peter Parker to take on photo assignments for the *Daily Bugle* or to deliver pizzas for Mr. Aziz. Not to sound too overanalytical, but what's with Robbie Robertson telling you to take pictures from the side of a building? Does he know you're Spider-Man? He must, especially since he always gives you a deadline of two or three minutes. And don't you think Mr. Aziz would get a few calls about Spider-Man delivering his pizzas when he gave them to Peter?



NOT ACQUIRED
ACQUIRED
NOT ACQUIRED
ACQUIRED
ACQUIRED
ACQUIRED
NOT ACQUIRED
NOT ACQUIRED

FINDING STUFF

Much like packages in *Grand Theft Auto*, various tokens can be found anywhere in Manhattan, from the tops of skyscrapers and buoys to thief hideouts and other nooks and crannies. Your reward for collecting all of a certain type? The green word "acquired" as opposed to the yellow words "not acquired" on the Awards screen. Yep...that's it.



Strapping criminals to light posts is one of the cool moves you can purchase from your local Spidey Store using hero points.

Spidey can even swing from trees if he's desperate for somewhere to place his webbing.

Stop everyday crimes either totally at random or when a pedestrian like this guy points out a wrongdoer.

The huge-ass wrench is obviously the in-weapon for NYC thugs this season.

place in the world, but this is ridiculous. Are there really daily shoot-outs between cops and robbers? Daily armored-car robberies for that matter? Even the "friendly neighborhood Spider-Man" sequences get tedious. Should I really be slinging a wounded construction worker through town to the hospital? Wouldn't an ambulance do a better job? And is every kid in town a whiner who's lost his balloon? Sure seems that way.

All of these menial tasks in a huge, free-roaming city take the focus off of the bigger fries to catch. By hour 10, I had beaten Doc Ock for good, but **defeating him in some ways felt more like a side quest than the central goal of the game.** Same goes for the other supervillains, especially Rhino (lame)—all four minutes of him. It's actually Mysterio (lamer) who poses the most opposition to the wall-crawler, with several challenges such as an obstacle course and a fun house that would make even the Joker proud. And then there's Shocker (lamest), whom I can only assume is there for the third time in the last three PlayStation Spider-Man titles because Treyarch was too lazy to design the Fabulous Frog-Man. At least Black Cat shows up in several chase missions (which, too, eventually grow tedious) to help extinguish the flame of lame (even if she basically is just a Catwoman rip-off).

This being a movie game and all, you'd think the best boss fights would belong to Doc Ock. Nah...just the last ones. And even **though the battles may occur in the same settings as the ones in the movie, they lack not only the coolness, but also the soul.** Much potential was lost in the train scene, which involves nothing more than fighting atop a train (and probably falling off a few times). Why can't Doc Ock terrorize passengers like he does in the movie? And once you beat him, why doesn't the game actually make *you* relive what could very well be the most superheroic, sacrificial moment in superhero movie history, when Spidey has to actually stop the train? We just get a lousy cut-scene instead. And just think of the possibilities if Treyarch had bothered to address the losing-powers aspect—it's not even mentioned.

If the team had been given another six months to work on the game, I'd like to think oversights like these could have been remedied. Maybe Treyarch could have tweaked *Spidey 2*'s general gameplay enough to at least approach the greatness of the web-slinging, too. This game is definitely worth playing, but it falls short of being an amazing *Spider-Man*. « *Chris Baker*

SPIDER-MAN 2 IS A VERITABLE WEB-SLINGING SIMULATOR.

EVERYDAY SUPERHEROICS

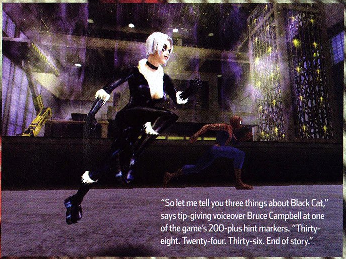
Here are a few of the random crimes and calls for help you'll stumble upon...way too often.

Retrieve lost balloons for every whiny kid in NYC.

Beat up wrench-wielding thugs who steal purses.

Save the same moron from falling off a ledge.

Do thousands of dollars of damage to speeders' cars.



"So let me tell you three things about Black Cat," says tip-giving voiceover Bruce Campbell at one of the game's 200-plus hint markers. "Thirty-eight. Twenty-four. Thirty-six. End of story."

OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE RATING

THE WEBSLINGING AND NYC MODEL
●●●●●

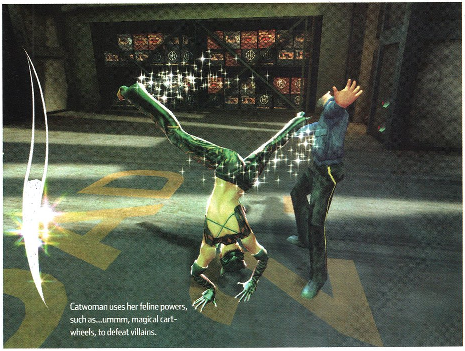
EVERYTHING ELSE
●●○○○

Pub. Activision **Dev.** Treyarch **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $49.99

[●●●◐○]

CATWOMAN

THIS CAT BREAKS ALL FOUR LEGS UPON LANDING



Catwoman uses her feline powers, such as...ummm, magical cartwheels, to defeat villains.

Somewhere out in the great beyond lies a parallel universe where everything is the opposite of ours (some have dubbed it "the Bizarro universe"). The proof: *Catwoman*, the Bizarro *Prince of Persia*. To put it in simpler terms, it's as if someone took the *Prince* formula, added a dash of digital Halle Berry, and then gave this recipe to an imbecile for actual concoction.

Everything that *Prince* did oh so right has been oh so bungled here. Gone are the great controls, the interesting jumping puzzles, and the slick combat. *Catwoman* instead sports horrendously nonsensical jumps, puzzles that lack purpose, and limp-wristed combat replete with terrible innuendos. What takes mere minutes in *Prince* or *Ninja Gaiden* is crippled and takes at least half an hour to accomplish here.

If the horrid controls or the demand for randomly acquired perfection (when there's essentially only one way to jump onto something, but you can't do it consistently and hence depend purely on luck at that point) didn't condemn the jumping puzzles, the nigh-useless camera does the trick. Several times, the camera not only fails to show where to jump to next, but it also switches angles at bizarre opportunities—which, due to camera-relative controls, means that Catwoman might switch direction in mid jump or climb.

The amazingly silly "scaredy cat" system allows Catwoman to disable enemies by throwing them into conveniently located vents, chests, or boxes. Luckily, if she doesn't throw them, they actually throw themselves in for you.

What few positives redeem *Catwoman* from being imprisoned in some sort of gaming gulag? Well, er, EA UK certainly knows how to make a pretty game, as colored lighting fogs and flares and blooms all over the place, and Catwoman is awash in an unearthly sheen. There are rare moments of competence, such as how Catwoman can latch her whip onto objects and run along the walls, and the chance to fight a golf-club–wielding Sharon Stone. With only a mere six chapters, the pain ends quickly.

If only EA could cast this back into the Bizarro dimension where it must have came from, then, maybe, all would be well. Until then, is fit only for level one felines. « *Thierry Nguyen*

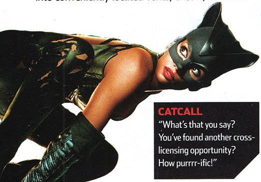
PlayStation RATING

PURRS The graphics look kind of neat, you get to fight a crazed, golf-club–wielding Sharon Stone!

KITTY LITTER Everything else

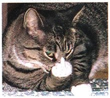
Pub. EA Games **Dev.** EA UK **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $39.99

[● ○ ○ ○ ○]



CATCALL

"What's that you say? You've found another cross-licensing opportunity? How purrrr-ific!"



CATEGORIES

As of 1998, the San Francisco SPCA classifies stray cats into five distinct levels.

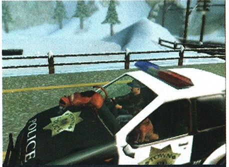
Level five cats will ferociously attack humans.

Level four cats are merely aggressive.

Level three cats are typical cats given for adoption.

Level two cats are mellow fellows.

Level one cats are so timid and slothlike as to appear lobotomized.



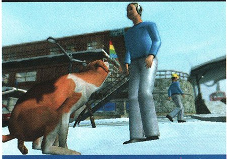
DOG'S LIFE

SEE HOW RUFF IT IS

Most dogs—and some people—are perfectly content with eating, sleeping, and pooping in front of cars, houses, or people. And while you can certainly do that in *Dog's Life*, there's little more to it. In fact, that's the most entertaining part—you'll have fun for the first few minutes exploring and finding out what sorts of wacky mischief Jake the dog can get into. Jake is very well animated, and the game as a whole looks quite a bit nicer in action than you might initially expect. Soon enough, though, the novelty wears off, and you start to realize the incredible tedium involved because the entire game is a fetch quest—with the ultimate goal being to free some bitch (literally) that got picked up by the dogcatchers.

"Get me this!" "Go here!" "Don't bite my face!" You'll hear it all as you perform a variety of tasks for people to earn your reward, which comes in the form of a bone. The number of bones you have basically dictates which areas you can visit on the journey to find your companion, but it's also a sign of your doggy influence. If you have more than a particular dog in the neighborhood, then you have a better chance of defeating it in one of several minigames.

But that's about all there is to this title. Dog lovers will initially get a kick out of *Dog's Life*, but doing the same thing over and over just doesn't make for a good game. « *Giancarlo Varanini*



PlayStation RATING

PROS It's a game about dogs, and you can poop on windshields

CONS Jake should have been voiced by Bruce Willis and not this annoying jerk

TRY INSTEAD *Air Bud: Seventh Inning Fetch*

Pub. Hip Interactive **Dev.** Frontier **ESRB** Everyone **MSRP** $19.99

[● ● ○ ○ ○]

RANGE SHORT
Southern Cross
SYMBOLOGY
44 MP
1000
0% RATE
HP 41820
MP 5641
FURY 100%
MANUAL
HP 36678
MP 6510
FURY 100%
MANUAL
HP 31442
MP 7560
FURY 57%

With a name like Fayt Leingod (center), you have to be destined for *some* sort of heroics.

Inventingenter commands.
Inventing
Star Ocean Till the End of Time
Direction
Check Status
Abort Development
72407
Line 1
Quality
Time
Cost
100
Line 2
Quality
Time
Cost
28
Line 3
Quality
Time
Cost

STAR OCEAN

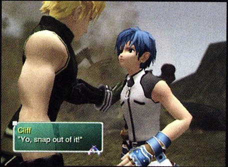
TILL THE END OF TIME

THE SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE REVEALED

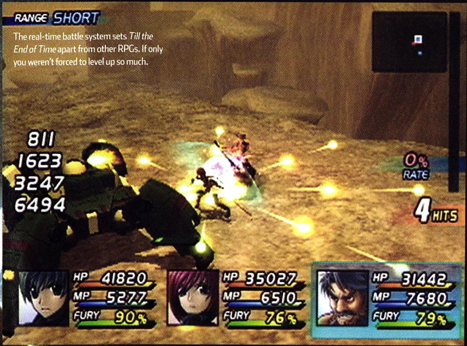
P1 RANGE SHORT
157 49
HP 5676
MP 950
FURY 100%
P1
HP 6183
MP 900
FURY 26%
CPU
HP 6918
MP 1175
FURY 32%
CPU

Inventing
Inventing
Star Ocean Till the End of Time
Direction
Check Status
Abort Development
98961
Line 1
Quality
Time
Cost
22
Line 2
Quality
Time
Cost
233
Line 3
Quality
Time
Cost

All right, our time is up. Let's move ahead with the second fight.
This is Arena Team Battle, Round Two.
Ready, go!"



Cliff
"Yo, snap out of it!"



The real-time battle system sets *Till the End of Time* apart from other RPGs. If only you weren't forced to level up so much.

The new *Star Ocean* aims no less than to define the very universe we're in. Other RPGs might feature massive wars and the destruction of worlds, but *Till the End of Time*'s intergalactic epic actually reveals the nature of our universe. The tasks you carry out include everything from destroying the creator of the universe to helping 15th-century savages demolish a fully functional alien battleship. To say that it's a hefty RPG is quite the understatement.

The *Star Ocean* franchise is known for its quirky battle system, which *Time* further refines. Out of three active characters, you directly control one while A.I. controls the other two. Besides watching over your hit points and magic points, you also have to manage your Fury, which determines what you can do and how well you can defend yourself. The enemies have Fury as well, so in addition to taking their HP or MP down, you have to keep in mind their Fury levels to know whether they can block your attack. Oh, and all this happens in real time.

At first, this combat exhilarates, but A.I. flaws appear soon enough. While you can set the A.I. to follow general behavior, you might find your other characters killing themselves or cowering in the corner unless you engage in a fair bit of micromanaging. Fighting also gets frustratingly hard, which annoyingly necessitates battles solely for leveling up.

The central story combines themes from *Star Wars, Star Trek*, and *The Matrix*, all powered by the traditional "young protagonist discovers his hidden heritage and goes on to defeat the Big Bad" plot. Most of the story grapples with the Prime Directive—er, the "UP3"—once the main characters crash-land on a medieval-era planet and start interfering with local politics. At some point, the game starts to explain the nature of the universe and breaks into *Matrix* territory—with all sorts of theological, technical, and philosophical gobbledygook thrown at you.

The whole story is fairly interesting except for the stretched-out middle segment that takes place on a single planet. Most of the game occurs on the medieval world and resembles a cookie-cutter RPG setting, but once you finally get off that planet, the game really ramps up.

If Tri-Ace had trimmed the voluminous fat off the middle section of the game and worked on the battle system some more, it would have made an excellent 20-hour RPG out of *Time*. As it is, though, the game is "merely" a solid 40-plus-hour RPG. But maybe you can enter 4D space and rewrite the universe itself to create a better, shorter game, as the characters within eventually do. « *Thierry Nguyen*

CHARACTERS WITH SOME CHARACTER

End of Time sports some of the silliest names in an RPG to date. Does anyone not see the transparent symbolism in the main character's name, "Fayt Leingod"? Is anyone menaced by an alien bigwig named "Biwig"? And why does Cliff Fittir sound like he's voiced by Duff Man from *The Simpsons*? The rest of the voice acting is fine, but the character names are still on the goofy side.

THE DIRECTOR'S CUT

The U.S. version of *End of Time* is basically Japan's director's cut of the game, so expect a bunch of extras such as party members, battle modes, dungeons, and even endings. While the game gives the player a lot to do, some of these extras could have used some polish; the item-invention system is barely explained and will prove baffling to newbies. The extra characters start at low levels, and since only three characters actively level at one time, you tend to use the same three characters throughout the whole game, since it would take too long to level the new ones.

OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE RATING

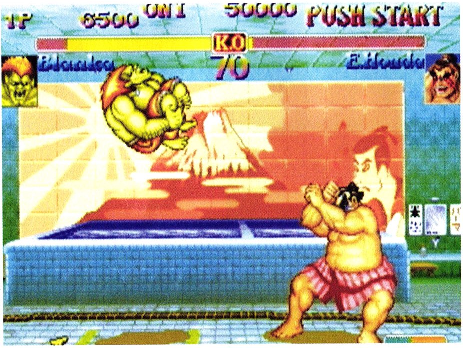
PROS Neat combat system, lots of game, fleshed-out universe with big words
CONS Flawed combat A.I., leveling up, boring middle section, needlessly big phrases like "Space-Time Discontinuity Shield"

Pub. Square Enix **Dev.** Tri-Ace **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $49.99

[●●●●○]

STREET FIGHTER ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION

ALL THE STREET FIGHTER, HALF THE FAT



Capcom's done a good job of sucking every last bit of life out of the *Street Fighter* franchise over the years. Still, fans of the series that revolutionized the fighting genre in the early '90s should hold a soft spot in their hearts for *Street Fighter Anniversary Collection*, which contains not only *Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike*, but also a compilation of the multiple versions of *Street Fighter II*.

Anniversary is not a compilation in the traditional sense, however. Instead of packaging each title as an individual option, Capcom has combined the old versions of *Street Fighter II* into one game, allowing you to select a specific version of a character. For example, the original *Street Fighter II* version of Ryu can take on the *Championship Edition* version of Blanka. Fans should also be pleased that the game retains winning poses and similar details for the characters, though all of the backgrounds come from *Super Street Fighter II: Turbo.*

In some respects, this kind of compilation is better than the alternative since it allows for previously impossible matchups. Plus, it's really fun to have one version of a character go up against another version of the same character to see who's better. Naturally, some weird balance issues present themselves when pitting an older character against a more recent counterpart, but anyone intimately familiar with *Street Fighter II* shouldn't have any problem dealing with them. Additionally, the computer only uses the *Super Street Fighter II: Turbo* version of each character in single player, so don't plan on honing your skills against characters from any other game when you take on the A.I.

None of this applies to *Street Fighter III: 3rd Impact*, the last game in the *Street Fighter III* series and one of the finest 2D fighters to date. Superb animation combines with nearly perfect fighting mechanics, as no particular character is completely dominant over another. *3rd Impact* doesn't have the same type of extras as the *Street Fighter II* compilation (which has the anime movie and three different types of background music), but it's still a strong component in an overall great package. « *Giancarlo Varanini*

8400
89
RYU
CHUN-LI

OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE RATING

PROS Gives *Street Fighter II* some new life, *Street Fighter III* is great
CONS It's *Street Fighter II*—let it die already!

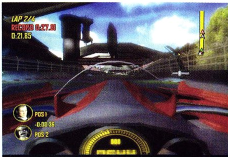
Pub. Capcom **Dev.** Capcom **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $29.99

[●●●●○]

1P 6000
PUSH START
K.O
72
Ryu
Cammy

TRY THIS

Ask one of the guys at your local EB Games store if they have a copy of *Power Drome.* None of the ones we asked had ever heard of it. Bodes well for any game, really, huh?



POWER DROME

IF THIS IS THE FUTURE OF RACING, I'M NOT INTERESTED

Just about every futuristic racing cliché you can think of appears in *Power Drome*. Spectacularly overdesigned hoverships? Check. Dudes with shaved heads and goatees? Of course! They're futuristic. Renegade, ex-military hotshots with bad attitudes? Certainly. Robots with attitude? Yup. Some nonsense about intergalactic hegemonies? Would you expect anything less?

Power Drome is like the challenged offspring of *WipeOut* and *Star Wars Racer Revenge*. Nowhere near as cool as the former, nor as fast as the latter, it sits in a void of futuristic mediocrity that makes you wonder why Argonaut bothered. It doesn't offer anything new to the genre, it's not cheap enough to be considered a bargain-basement alternative to anything, and it has about as much personality as cabbage.

For all the talk of "attitude and style" on the back of the box, you'd expect at least some of it to be evident. All the characters have *Star Wars* names, such as Abel Vorsh or Sun Mateeb, and they're all terribly talented, or tortured, or both, and they all fly ships (very dramatically called "blades") that look like a stealth bomber collided head-on with a Formula 1 car.

Gameplay is a bit like flying a jet fighter through a bendy straw. All of the spindly looking ships fly at ludicrous speeds along tracks that are far too narrow to make the gameplay fun. It's like the really frustrating parts of *WipeOut 3* (and there were *plenty* of them) stuck together in one game, with all the fun weapons taken out.

If you bother to get used to the controls, you can eventually run through things pretty smoothly, but...let's face it—why bother? There are scores of infinitely more interesting racing games on PS2. Pick one of those up instead. « *John Davison*

OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE RATING

IF it were $15 cheaper
THEN the score would be double
EITHER WAY it's not worth it

Pub. Mud Duck **Dev.** Argonaut **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $29.99

[●○○○○]

ESPN NFL 2K5

YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR...AND THEN SOME

OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE
GAME OF THE MONTH

Not to sound like an infomercial or anything, but $19.99 is an insanely low price for a game like *ESPN NFL 2K5*, especially when you consider some of the additions that Visual Concepts has made this year. However, it's worth pointing out that most of these new options simply add a layer of polish to preexisting aspects of the game.

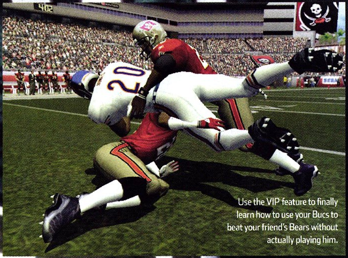
For instance, in the first-person football mode, you can zoom out and go back to the default view if you're not totally comfortable playing in first person during an important play. Also, in franchise mode, you can select the GameCast Live option if you feel like jumping into a simulated game to save your team from a merciless pounding.

That's not all. There are a bunch of other tweaks and relatively minor changes here and there in terms of the gameplay modes. Visual Concepts has integrated all of the online stuff into one area, so if you're a part of an online season, there's no need to go sniffing around an external website to look at stats or find out when your next game starts (but you can if you want to).

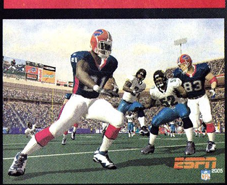
Visual Concepts has also ramped up a lot of the ESPN presentation elements. You not only get to see a polygonal Chris Berman before the start of the game, but you also get to view moving highlights during the postgame show or the GameCast mode if you have the PS2 hard drive (without it, you'll just get static shots like last year).

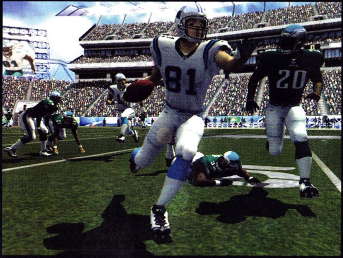
Also, The Crib returns from last year's game and functions like before, only now you don't just unlock items, you have to use points you've earned to buy them instead. There's some pretty cool stuff in there, ranging from dartboards and cool little bobbleheads of star players to posters showcasing Chris Berman in all of his jovial glory. You can even unlock video interviews with some of the low-rent celebrities used to showcase the Virtual Identity Profile (conveniently shortened to VIP) feature.

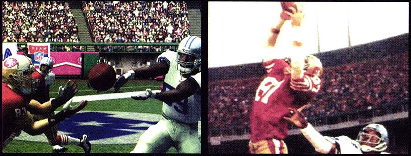
Yes, you too can play against Steve-O or David Arquette! How is this possible, you ask? **VIP takes the idea of tracking statistics and play calling to an entirely new level** by using that data to construct a virtual profile of yourself, opponents, or anyone else who plays the game. So, when you load up a VIP, it's about as close as you can get to playing against someone without *actually* playing against him or her. Admittedly, it's pretty cool to see the computer play just as that person would, and it really comes in handy if you want to practice against a specific online opponent, a friend's team, or a celebrity (whom, admittedly, few football fans would



Use the VIP feature to finally learn how to use your Bucs to beat your friend's Bears without actually playing him.







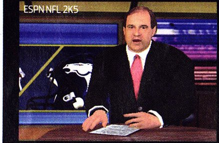
RELIVE IT...SORT OF

On paper, the ESPN 25th Anniversary section seems cool. Who wouldn't want to relive some of professional football's greatest moments, like the Immaculate Reception or the Ice Bowl? Unfortunately, it's just not possible to replicate most of these moments, so you have to use other methods that aren't quite as magical. From what we remember, pass interference wasn't called on Joe Montana's touchdown pass to Dwight Clark that sent the 49ers to Super Bowl XVI.

IT'S REALLY HARD TO FAULT 2K5 WITH SUCH A LOW PRICE.

FIVE WAYS ESPN IS BETTER THAN MADDEN

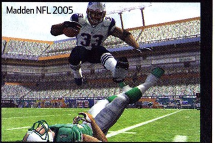
1. The online seasons blow away *Madden*'s tournament system
2. ESPN integration and presentation
3. Better cut-scenes (including customizable celebrations) and player faces...and bouncier cheerleaders
4. Price
5. Yo, VIP—let's kick it



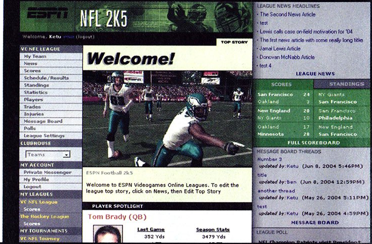
ESPN NFL 2K5

FIVE WAYS MADDEN IS BETTER THAN ESPN

1. Storyline Central (including Tony Bruno's radio show, local newspapers, and more) highlights a stronger franchise mode
2. Playmaker control
3. Harder hits
4. Better-looking on-field gameplay
5. More polished gameplay in general



Madden NFL 2005



Welcome, Ketu (logout)

VC NFL LEAGUE
- My Team
- News
- Scores
- Schedule/Results
- Standings
- Statistics
- Players
- Trades
- Injuries
- Message Board
- Polls
- League Settings

CLUBHOUSE
- Teams

MY ACCOUNT
- Private Messenger
- My Profile
- Logout

MY LEAGUES
- VC NFL League
  - Scores
- The Hockey League
  - Scores

MY TOURNAMENTS
- VC NFL Tourney

TOP STORY

Welcome!

ESPN Football 2k5

Welcome to ESPN Videogames Online Leagues. To edit the league top story, click on News, then Edit Top Story

PLAYER SPOTLIGHT

Tom Brady (QB)

Last Game	Season Stats
352 Yds	3479 Yds

LEAGUE NEWS HEADLINES
- The Second News Article
- test
- Lewis calls case on-field motivation for '04
- The first news article with some really long title
- Jamal Lewis Article
- Donovan McNabb Article
- test 4

LEAGUE NEWS

SCORES		STANDINGS
San Francisco	24	NY Giants
Oakland	3	San Francisco
New England	20	San Francisco
NY Giants	10	Philadelphia
Oakland	17	New England
Minnesota	28	San Francisco

FULL SCOREBOARD

MESSAGE BOARD THREADS

Number 3
*updated by:*Ketu (Jun 8, 2004 5:46PM)

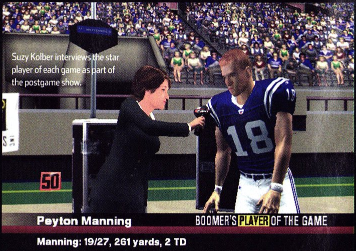
title
*updated by:*Ben (Jun 8, 2004 12:59PM)

another thread
*updated by:*Ketu (May 26, 2004 5:11PM)

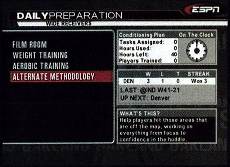
test
*updated by:*Ketu (May 26, 2004 4:59PM)

MESSAGE BOARD

LEAGUE POLL



Suzy Kolber interviews the star player of each game as part of the postgame show.



DAILYPREPARATION
WIDE RECEIVERS

FILM ROOM
WEIGHT TRAINING
AEROBIC TRAINING
ALTERNATE METHODOLOGY

Conditioning Plan — On The Clock
Tasks Assigned: 0
Hours Used: 0
Hours Left: 40
Players Trained: 0

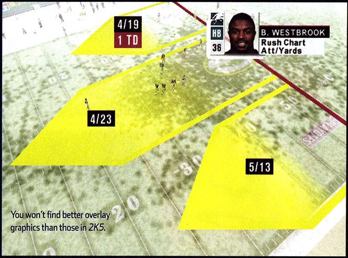
	W	L	T	STREAK
DEN	3	1	0	Won 3

LAST: @IND W41-21
UP NEXT: Denver

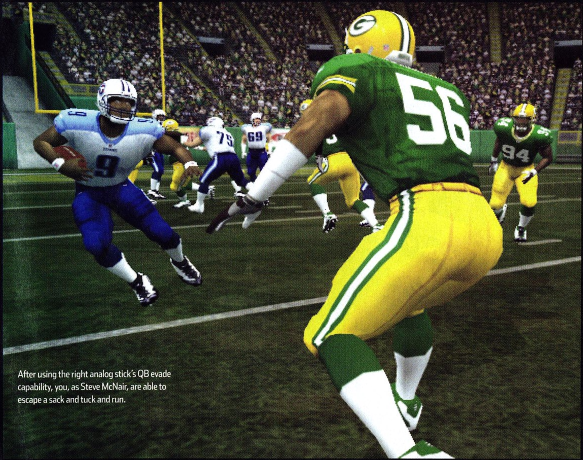
WHAT'S THIS?
Help players hit those areas that are off the map, working on everything from focus to confidence in the huddle.

CHALK TALK

The biggest change to franchise mode this year is the pregame preparation (above). Over the course of the week, you can schedule meetings, workouts for specific groups of players, or even some time to look at film. You can also ramp up rehabilitation for injured players to get them back on the field in time for a big game. At the end of the week, you'll see what kind of effect your decisions had on individual players, as well as overall team morale and focus. It adds a lot of depth to franchise mode, but it almost seems superficial, since you can play just as well by avoiding preparations almost completely.



You won't find better overlay graphics than those in *2K5*.



After using the right analog stick's QB evade capability, you, as Steve McNair, are able to escape a sack and tuck and run.

actually care about).

It's also a good way to familiarize yourself with the gameplay, but if you played the last version of *ESPN NFL*, you shouldn't have any trouble diving right in. **The running game is about as balanced as it gets** in terms of how star running backs act in the game—none of them will have a dominant game if you play smart defense.

Speaking of defense, one of the new features included in *2K5* is the dynamic tackle. Not entirely unlike *Madden*'s hit stick, this feature allows you to execute a strong, fumble-causing hit or a safer wrap tackle. Generally, it's just a good idea to go for a basic tackle, especially against some of the stronger running backs and wide receivers since they can easily break solo tackles in the secondary just by simply dropping the ol' shoulder.

The passing game isn't quite as fine-tuned because **it's almost too easy to exploit certain matchups and use money plays** (or plays that are almost guaranteed to get you six or seven yards). Plus, quarterbacks have new evade abilities (like ducking tackles), making it even a little easier to abuse certain plays, particularly during a blitz.

Granted, the money-play problem applies more to A.I. opponents as opposed to humans because humans can generally recognize the money-play formation and adjust accordingly, using defensive hot routes. Otherwise, it all comes down to calling the right plays and making the right decision when you have an opponent of equal skill. And that's what football should be all about.

At any rate, it's really hard to fault *2K5* for any shortcomings with such a low price, but regardless, as a football fan, you'll be getting a great football game. And while there aren't as many huge additions this year as last year, the level of refinement applied to nearly every facet of the game makes it worth buying. « *Giancarlo Varanini*

OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE RATING

TDS Great-looking game, new animations add excellent realism, VIP feature is pretty fun
FUMBLES A good portion of the new stuff is relatively minimal, a few problems with abusing money plays

Pub. ESPN VG **Dev.** Vis. Con. **ESRB** Everyone **MSRP** $19.99

[⬢⬢⬢⬢⬡]

ON SECOND THOUGHT

ESPN NFL 2K5 definitely has one of the most innovative features this year in its VIP system. This is something every other sports game in existence should emulate (although, like with EA's pitch meter in *MVP*, few will, for fear of looking like copycats). And with its price and overall quality, it's hard not to recommend *2K5* as the football game to pick up this year if—and I must stress this—you're just a *casual* videogame football player who thinks it'd be nice to throw the pigskin around every now and then. I still don't think the overall gameplay succeeds as much as *Madden*'s does for more hardcore folks, though. If you've got an extra 30 bucks lying around, EA's game is the way to go. Or do yourself a favor and buy both. « *Chris Baker*

GHOST HUNTER

I AIN'T 'FRAID OF NO GHOSTS

In this European port from Namco, you play as Lazarus Jones, NYPD, who has been sent with his partner to an abandoned school to investigate a routine complaint. After your partner is kidnapped by a crazy spirit, you're tasked by the supercomputer henchman of a professor (don't ask) to get to the bottom of things.

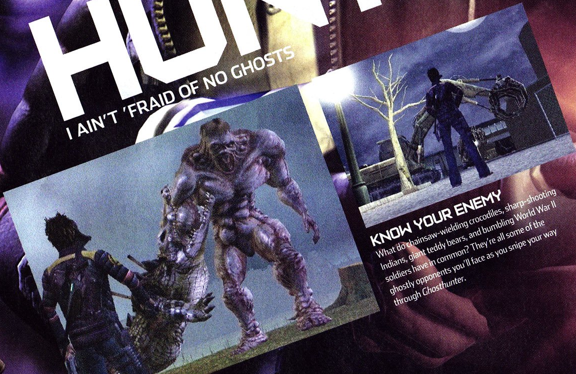
Ghosthunter's graphics are quite impressive, and you can roam around a nice variety of environments. The atmosphere can be quite spooky, too, as you sneak around the abandoned buildings waiting to see what jumps out at you (do keep in mind, however, that I'm an easy target, so the manly among you might not yelp as much as I did).

The plot, sadly, does not fare nearly as well as the graphics. You may prefer to jump past all the cut-scenes, since paying attention won't give you any better idea of what's going on in this nonsensical muddle of a story. Voice acting is decent, and I kind of like the villains—but I hate Lazarus. He's a moron who runs around spouting lines like "Just because you're a ghost doesn't mean you're outside the justice of the NYPD." By the end of the game, I was rooting for him to die.

One unique aspect of *Ghosthunter* is that portions have you playing as Lazarus' spiritual counterpart, Astral. Anytime you hit a summoning circle, you know you'll need Astral's special abilities to open up the next part of the level. She's an interesting concept, but for the most part, her existence in the game is pointless. A lot of her help is with actions you've already performed on your own at an earlier point in the game. For example, I got rid of a barricade of tables and chairs with the help of my grenade launcher, but for some reason the next stack of tables and chairs was immune to grenades and required Astral's poltergeist ability in order to be destroyed.

Design flaws like this are the game's big downfall. In their attempts to construct a linear path, **the developers completely ignored logic.** Rather than designing environments that guide you intuitively, they keep you on track by changing the rules to suit the needs of that moment. Which is why you'll find yourself unable to crawl through empty shelves to reach a door and instead be forced to summon a spirit to knock over the shelves for you. It's lazy, antiquated design, and in a post–*Grand Theft Auto* world where gamers expect to be able to interact with and damage the gaming environments, it just doesn't cut it.

Throw in lukewarm A.I. and some clipping problems, and you've got a scary, pretty game that's just not a whole lot of fun to play. « *Dana Jongewaard*



KNOW YOUR ENEMY
What do chainsaw-wielding crocodiles, sharp-shooting Indians, giant teddy bears, and bumbling World War II soldiers have in common? They're all some of the ghostly opponents you'll face as you snipe your way through *Ghosthunter*.

OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE RATING

GOOD Nice graphics, scary atmosphere, cool-looking villains
BAD Nonsensical story, dumb main character
UGLY Lack of gameplay logic

Pub. Namco **Dev.** Sony Cambridge **ESRB** Mature **MSRP** $49.99

[●●●◐○○]

MALICE

MORE LIKE INDIFFERENCE

It was supposed to display the graphical might of Xbox. It was going to showcase the voiceover/singing "talents" of Gwen Stefani and the rest of the No Doubt gang. Then, without fanfare, all of that quietly disappeared from the project. Now, four years after *Malice* started development, it has finally emerged. And maybe it shouldn't have.

Malice, a pigtailed, crop-top-wearing, adolescent-looking goddess, has been beheaded and is trying to redeem herself by defeating the opponent who killed her in the first place. In the hands of the mechanical god, she ventures out to battle her enemies, which are primarily crows with different weapons (although the occasional roach or mushroom appears).

Camera controls can be incredibly frustrating, and enemies (and the combat tactics used to defeat them) are quite limited. While you earn special powers upon completing the various levels, I only ended up using one of them to help me finish the game. Bosses, while coming in different shapes, can all be beaten using the same "avoid attacks and hit them while they're recovering" technique.

Lengthy cut-scenes are even more tedious than they might normally be, with the combination of poorly written dialogue and bad voice acting. Are they British actors trying to sound Southern hick or Southern hick actors trying to sound British? I can't tell!

When all is said and done, *Malice* is a mediocre game, not a bad one. However, when you consider how far short it fell of its original promise, it comes across as less than average. « *Dana Jongewaard*

OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE RATING

BETTER THAN Having to listen to all the No Doubt albums back-to-back
WORSE THAN Watching Gwen Stefani in the No Doubt videos

Pub. Mud Duck **Dev.** Argonaut **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $29.99

[● ● ◐ ○ ○]

ECHO NIGHT: BEYOND

MOSTLY BORING WITH A CHANCE OF FEAR

The basis of *Echo Night: Beyond* is brilliantly simple. A shuttle crash leaves you stranded on a lunar base crawling with malevolent ghosts. Weaponless and defenseless, you must discover the fate of your travel companion by helping the restless spirits find release.

This is a great idea. For one thing, it offers a neat setup for From's trademark first-person play: You're peering out at the world from inside a spacesuit, with the base lit mainly by nice-looking real-time lighting effects from the searchlight attached to your helmet (which dims without constant replenishing, adding to the atmosphere). Every movement is deliberate, and running requires major exertion.

This leads to the second excellent idea: The designers have replaced the health bar with an elegant monitor of your heart rate. When you run for long periods of time, it climbs; when you get close to ghosts, it spikes. And if you stick around too long near a malevolent ghost, your heart gives out and you die. Neat, huh?

The trouble is, the game consists almost entirely of an agonizing scavenger hunt. Setting free each ghost requires a particular item—but which one is rarely clear. Most of the time it's only possible to figure out if you already have the item; if not, you'll wander for hours until you stumble upon something tucked away in a corner that might work. Or it might not. On one hand, it's a challenging cerebral puzzle; on the other, it's spectacularly bad game design. Either way, it hurts *Beyond* by pulling you out of the excellent atmosphere and interesting (if horribly written and performed) story. The result is a few moments of fright and a whole lot of trial and error, backtracking, and head-scratching frustration. « *Joe Rybicki*

OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE RATING

PROS Very nice atmosphere, a few scary moments, an innovative interface
CONS You're just a delivery boy to the lunar afterlife—if you can figure out what to deliver

Pub. Agetec **Dev.** From Software **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $39.99

[● ● ● ○ ○]

WE PLAYED IT FOR YOU

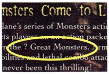
Whereas *Beyond* features more of a futuristic setting, the original *Echo Night* (PS1, 1999) took place in the 1930s. Gameplay was fairly similar, though, as you solved simple puzzles to set wandering souls to rest.

MCFARLANE'S EVIL PROPHECY

EVERY GENERATION HAS ITS TRUE CRAP

True story: The first few hundred copies of *McFarlane's Evil Prophecy* went out, probably only to folks on Konami's press list, with a typo on the back of the box. Soon enough, I'd find that the typo's very existence exemplifies how much care seemed to go into developing a quality game. "Based on Todd McFarlane's series of Monsters action figures," the early boxes read, "*Evil Prophecy* sets players on an action-packed adventure to hunt down the ? Great Monsters."

If you're feeling a little "?" yourself after reading that sentence, it seems likely some Konami marketing guy—I'll just assume he's a pimply faced intern named Fred—meant to eventually fill in the question mark with "six" but forgot. I'd like to think, though, that there were possibly a couple other things going through Fred's head when he put it there.



nsters Come to L
lane's series of Monsters acti
ts players on an action packe
n the ? Great Monsters. Arm
bilities and lethal combo attac
never been this thrilling!

IN CASE YOU DON'T BELIEVE IT...

Here's the back of the boxed copy of *McFarlane's Evil Prophecy* we received. Ones you see in stores will probably have the typo fixed, but we'd advise you to not even check, as the crap vibes this game emits could seriously come to ruin the rest of your day.

First, it's possible that Fred accidentally inserted the question mark to represent the uncertainty lingering in his brain as to—cool-looking short McFarlane cartoon notwithstanding—why the hell anyone would buy this fun-free *Dynasty Warriors* wannabe. What does it matter that there are six bosses when you're sick of the game by the time you fight the Werewolf in the first level?

Or perhaps Fred is cursed with a conscience and felt he had to do *something* to let consumers know just how crappy *Prophecy* really is. *Something* had to symbolize its worthless combos, horrible-looking characters, poor level design, inexcusably low production values (no speech...at all), and absolutely pathetic special attacks that take five seconds to complete. And why on earth would anyone make a four-player beat-em-up that only allows for one player in story mode?

Either way, Fred and I both know that *Prophecy* is one of the worst PS2 games ever. If it has anything going for it, it's this: Those copies with the typo on them could turn out to be one heck of a collector's item. « *Chris Baker*

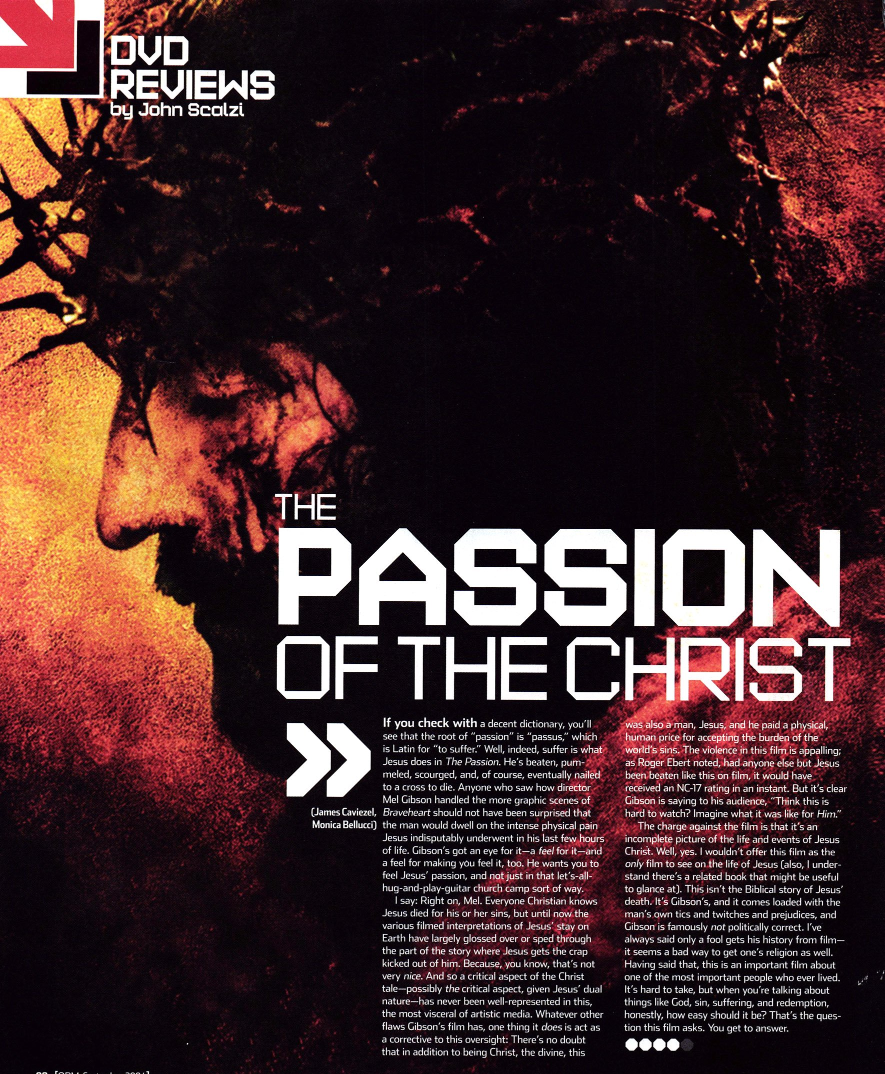
OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE RATING

THE EVIL PROPHECY REVEALED...
Well into the year 2004,
When the Mummy moans and Dracula soars,
Konami will try to make a few bucks,
Knowing full well its game totally sucks.

Pub. Konami **Dev.** Konami **ESRB** Mature **MSRP** $39.99

[◐ ○ ○ ○ ○]

by John Scalzi



(James Caviezel, Monica Bellucci)

THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

If you check with a decent dictionary, you'll see that the root of "passion" is "passus," which is Latin for "to suffer." Well, indeed, suffer is what Jesus does in *The Passion*. He's beaten, pummeled, scourged, and, of course, eventually nailed to a cross to die. Anyone who saw how director Mel Gibson handled the more graphic scenes of *Braveheart* should not have been surprised that the man would dwell on the intense physical pain Jesus indisputably underwent in his last few hours of life. Gibson's got an eye for it—a *feel* for it—and a feel for making you feel it, too. He wants you to feel Jesus' passion, and not just in that let's-all-hug-and-play-guitar church camp sort of way.

I say: Right on, Mel. Everyone Christian knows Jesus died for his or her sins, but until now the various filmed interpretations of Jesus' stay on Earth have largely glossed over or sped through the part of the story where Jesus gets the crap kicked out of him. Because, you know, that's not very *nice*. And so a critical aspect of the Christ tale—possibly *the* critical aspect, given Jesus' dual nature—has never been well-represented in this, the most visceral of artistic media. Whatever other flaws Gibson's film has, one thing it *does* is act as a corrective to this oversight: There's no doubt that in addition to being Christ, the divine, this was also a man, Jesus, and he paid a physical, human price for accepting the burden of the world's sins. The violence in this film is appalling; as Roger Ebert noted, had anyone else but Jesus been beaten like this on film, it would have received an NC-17 rating in an instant. But it's clear Gibson is saying to his audience, "Think this is hard to watch? Imagine what it was like for *Him*."

The charge against the film is that it's an incomplete picture of the life and events of Jesus Christ. Well, yes. I wouldn't offer this film as the *only* film to see on the life of Jesus (also, I understand there's a related book that might be useful to glance at). This isn't the Biblical story of Jesus' death. It's Gibson's, and it comes loaded with the man's own tics and twitches and prejudices, and Gibson is famously *not* politically correct. I've always said only a fool gets his history from film—it seems a bad way to get one's religion as well. Having said that, this is an important film about one of the most important people who ever lived. It's hard to take, but when you're talking about things like God, sin, suffering, and redemption, honestly, how easy should it be? That's the question this film asks. You get to answer.

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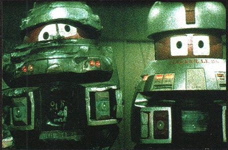

THE BLACK HOLE

(Maximilian Schell, Anthony Perkins)

A stinky 1979 piece of Disney space cheese that was also the company's first non-G movie (probably PG for the part where Anthony Perkins gets shredded by a homicidal robot). Its "mad scientist in space" plot is bad—really bad—and clearly an attempt to cash in on the *Star Wars* craze, right down to the fey robot (V.I.N.CENT, floating about like C-3PO's tubby cousin). Turn off the sound, however, and you'll be struck at how beautiful the film is, even 25 years later—it was nominated for a cinematography Oscar. It's also got a fine score by John Barry. So, for total crap, it's decent.

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KILL BILL VOL. 2

(Uma Thurman, David Carradine)

Kill Bill Vol. 1 was like a speed rush of bloody, messy, basically adolescent fun, and everybody loved it. But longtime Quentin Tarantino fans couldn't help but notice that once you got past the action, there wasn't much *there* there: It lacked the soul that was at the center of Tarantino's other work, even at its most violent. Where is the soul? Why, it's in *Vol. 2*—remember, these were originally thought of as one long film—and Tarantino finesses it beautifully, giving both Thurman's vengeful almost-mother and Carradine's weary assassin a grounding in realty (no small feat, given the over-the-top nature of this flick). After years away, it's grand to see that Tarantino hasn't lost his touch and that his love of pop-culture overload hasn't yet overwhelmed his ability to make characters matter.

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THE GIRL NEXT DOOR

(Elisha Cuthbert, James Remar, Emile Hirsch)

A smudged, third-generation photocopy of *Risky Business* in which a dork (Hirsch) gets turned on by his superhot new neighbor (Cuthbert), who just happens to be a former porn star. Leaving aside the issue that the film wants to have it both ways—it wants to thrill you with the idea of a professional hump bunny living next door while also vaguely hinting that boinking is no way to make a living—the humor here is limp, and the film as a whole just can't get it up. This is a teen comedy in need of its very own fluffer. And there's an image you'll carry with you to your grave.

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GODSEND

(Greg Kinnear, Rebecca Romijn-Stamos)

I don't believe this still needs to be said: When a sinister-looking Robert De Niro comes up to you and offers you something—say, the chance to clone your dead child—run the other way. And don't look back. Because if you *don't* run, among other things, you'll be trapped in a very silly movie in which the cloned child suddenly sprouts *Omen*-like tendencies, and no matter how good of an actor you are, you'll simply look foolish. This is one of those movies that requires everyone in it—and everyone watching—to be a bit of an idiot in order to be surprised at what comes next.

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DVD RELEASES

August 3, 2004
13 Going on 30
The Black Hole
Elvis movies (6)
Gidget: Movie Collection
Hidalgo
Jack
Knight Rider: Season 1
The Princess Diaries SE
Sliders: Seasons 1 & 2

August 10, 2004
ALF: Season 1
Bill Cosby: Himself
Good Times: Season 3
Highlander: Season 5
Johnson Family Vacation
Kill Bill Vol. 2
Late Night 10th Anniversary
Late Night: Best of Triumph
Predator: Collector's Edition
Yu-Gi-Oh! Season 1

August 17, 2004
Babylon 5: Movie Collection
Godsend
GoodFellas
The Guyver 1 & 2

August 24, 2004
The Apprentice: Season 1
Boy Meets World: Season 1
Dallas: Seasons 1 & 2
Ella Enchanted
Futurama: Season 4
The Girl Next Door
Godzilla: The Series
Purple Rain SE

August 31, 2004
Chris Rock: Never Scared
Jesus Christ Superstar SE
The Lion King 2
The Passion of the Christ
Slacker
South Park: The Passion of the Jew
Star Trek: Season 1
Trekkies 2

HIDALGO

(Viggo Mortensen, Omar Sharif)

It's about the relationship between a man and his horse (and why don't you slap yourself for that thought you just had, you sick twist). This is an old-fashioned adventure, good-natured and a tiny bit stuffy, but I mean that in a nice way. Mortensen is a suitably conflicted half-breed cowboy competing in a race across 3,000 miles of Sahara to prove his worth and the worth of his trusted steed. It's got lots of action, a nifty sandstorm, and Mortensen himself, who rather handily answers the question of whether he'll be able to get past that whole Aragorn thing.

●●●◐○

JOHNSON FAMILY VACATION

(Cedric the Entertainer, Vanessa Williams)

There are many unanswered questions in the universe, lots involving God or fate or the composition of potted meat food products. But one of the more recent is this: Why is Cedric the Entertainer, so good in the *Barbershops*, channeling Chevy Chase in *Johnson Family Vacation*? Wasn't the first Chevy enough? Given the whole channeling thing, it's not too surprising *Vacation* plays like Chase's various *Vacations*, with an African-American overlay. So if you like those, you'll like this. But Cedric, really: Find another role model. Fast.

●●●○○

KNIGHT RIDER: SEASON ONE

(David Hasselhoff, Edward Mulhare)

Man drives around in a fussy-talking Pontiac, solving idiotic crimes because he apparently has nothing better to do. This stretched on for five seasons, and I have to admit that my stupid preadolescent self is partly to blame. Yes, I avidly watched *Knight Rider* and by extension am complicit in enabling Hasselhoff to go on to German pop stardom and *Baywatch*. Honestly, I'm sorry. I was young and stupid. It'll never happen again, I swear. Also, sorry for *Family Ties* and at least four seasons of *The X-Files*. My bad.

●●◐○○

13 GOING ON 30

(Jennifer Garner, Mark Ruffalo)

Given that nearly every single person is at their *worst* when they are 13, why would anyone think a grown woman acting that age is somehow cute? This question kept nagging me through *13 Going on 30*, and while there's something fascinating about watching a hot, hot woman like Jennifer Garner skip around like a tweener, it's also, you know, *really* creepy. Perhaps I've dwelled on this aspect of the film too much. To be fair, I found *Big* kind of creepy, too. At least my twitchiness about age-switchin' adults is gender neutral.

●●●○○

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PARTNERSHIP WITH PRIMA Prima Games, leading publisher of gaming guides, provides OPM with top-of-the-line strategies every month. In this issue, they shared their expertise on Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow, DRIV3R, NCAA Football 2005, Madden NFL 2005, and Red Dead Revolver.

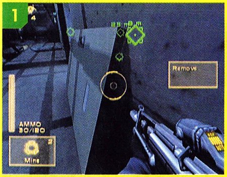
PANTHERS
PITTSBURGH
1

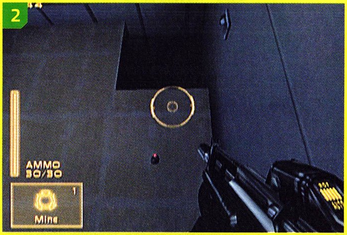
110› **NCAA 2005 STRATEGY**

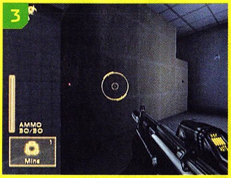
THE FASTEST WAY TO THE END ZONE

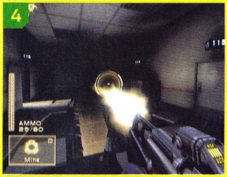
SPLINTER CELL PANDORA TOMORROW

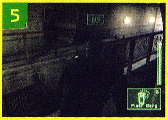
THIS MONTH WE BRING YOU TIPS FOR OUR FAVORITE MULTIPLAYER MAP, MOUNT HOSPITAL

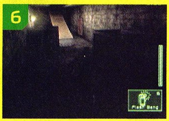


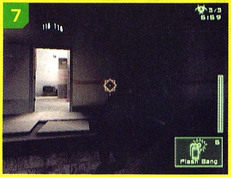


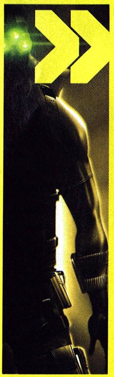












Temple Mount Hospital, specializing in care for the aging, is under construction. With the lapse in exterior security and a bunch of canisters to retrieve, the hospital runs lasers across its key doors to alert mercenaries of spy activity. The building has two floors that you can reach by stairs in the middle and corners of each level. The first floor grants access to the sewer system and holds two ND133 tubes. The second floor contains canisters in the nursery and rooms 202 and 212.

MERCENARIES

As a mercenary, you have to be aware of what's around you. If you're camping, keep your back to the wall and your motion tracker on. When patrolling, check around, especially above and behind you. You never know when a spy will be lurking in the shadows, ready to pounce and snap your neck.

MINE LOCATIONS

1 Hide a proximity mine behind the fallen door in the main hall. The mine is impossible to see at this location, giving spies no time to disarm it. When a spy comes knocking for a cup of sugar, he'll get more than he bargained for.

2 Putting a proximity mine under the side room's vent is another great way to ambush those pesky spies. They won't be able to see the mine, and when they try to jump to the floor, they'll get blasted into tiny spy bits.

3 A laser mine planted near the door to the vent is a great way to get a kill. As the spies enter the room and focus on the proximity mine under the vent, they step right through the laser. Disrupting the laser means instant death for a poor spy. Place the mine far enough away from the doorway so that a chaff grenade won't trip it before it has time to blast the spy.

GUARD ZONE

4 Go straight down the hall and make a right. Proceed past the opening in the ground and turn left at the hall's end. Go past the stairs and wait for spies coming up the ramp. From here, there are three ND133 sites not far from one another. This is the best place to hold with one or two people. It allows you to reach any of the ND133 sites.

SPIES

Teamwork and communication are important. Allow an alarm to go off to attract a mercenary into a desired area. The person farthest from the target shoots him with the stun gun and then the other spy snaps his neck. You cannot snap a merc's neck while he is being shocked.

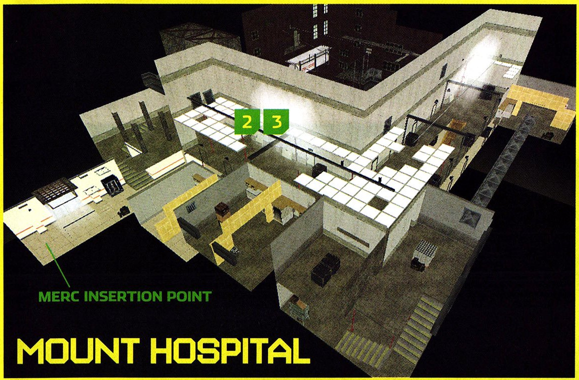
INSERTION ROUTE

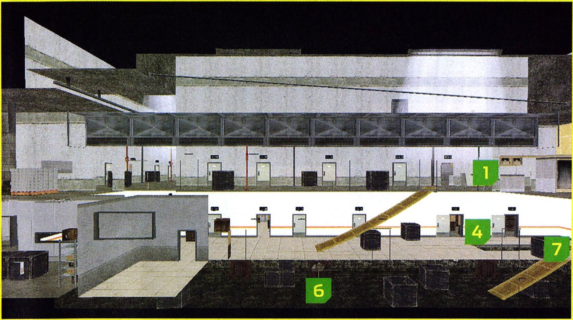
The following insertion route is one of the fastest for this level. It can get you to the ND133 faster than the mercenaries can get there. That leaves you time to deactivate the tube before the bullets fly your way.

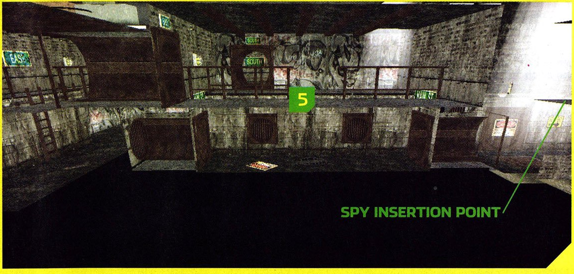
5 You spawn in a dark underground tunnel. From there, drop into the murkiness and turn left. Jump on the left wall and go through the tunnel marked "East."

6 As you approach the ramp leading up, put on your thermal goggles and peek above and behind you. Sometimes a merc will get there fast enough, and you can see his body heat before he sees you. If the merc is there, you'll have the drop on him and be able to blast him before he blasts you.

7 Time to go up the ramp to the main hall. Your final destination is the room with the ND133 site at the top of the ramp. Be careful when you enter the room. Watch out for the sensor on the far wall. If you set it off, you're in trouble. Get by it and you're golden. «







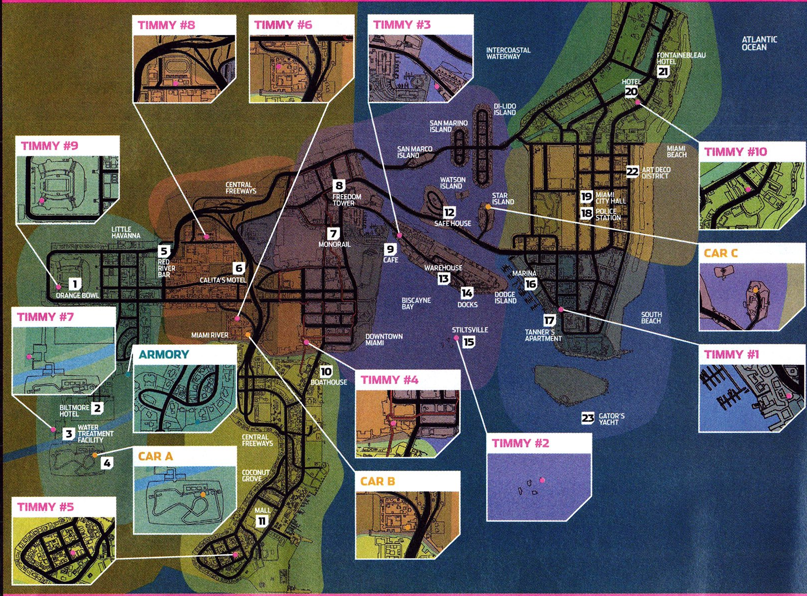
PS2 TRICKS AND REVIEW ARCHIVE

Game names in cyan indicate a Greatest Hits title. Ratings in red indicate a score of 5 out of 5. ⚡indicates the game supports online play.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
.hack//INFECTION	Bandai	●●●◖	65
.hack//MUTATION	Bandai	●●●●	69
.hack//OUTBREAK	Bandai	●●●●	73
.hack//QUARANTINE	Bandai	●●●●	76
18 Wheeler American Pro Trucker	Acclaim	●●●●	52
4x4 EVO	GOD Games	●●●●	44
2002 FIFA World Cup	EA Sports	●●●●	58
Ace Combat 04: Shattered Skies	Namco	●●●●◖	51
Activision Anthology	Activision	●●●●	64
Aero Elite: Combat Academy	Sega	●●●	67
The Adventures of Cookie & Cream	Agetec	●●●◖	44
Aggressive Inline	Acclaim	●●●●◖	59
Airblade	Namco	●●●●	53
Airforce Delta Strike	Konami	●●●	78
Alias	Acclaim	●●◖	81
Aliens Versus Predator: Extinction	EA Games	●●●◖	72
All-Star Baseball 2002	Acclaim	●●●◖	44
All-Star Baseball 2003	Acclaim	●●●◖	56
All-Star Baseball 2004	Acclaim	●●●	67
⚡All-Star Baseball 2005	Acclaim	●●◖	80
Alter Echo	THQ	●●	73
American Idol	Codemasters	●	77
⚡Amplitude	Sony CEA	●●●●	68
Antz Extreme Racing	Empire	●◖	61
Ape Escape 2	Ubisoft	●●●●◖	70
Aqua Aqua	3DO	●●	42
Arc the Lad: Twilight of the Spirits	Sony CEA	●●●●	70
Arctic Thunder	Midway	●	50
Armored Core 2	Agetec	●●●	39
Armored Core 2: Another Age	Agetec	●●●◖	48
Armored Core 3	Agetec	●●●◖	61
Army Men: Air Attack	3DO	●●●◖	44
Army Men: Green Rogue	3DO	●●	45
Army Men RTS	3DO	●●●●	56
Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2	3DO	●●◖	45
Athens 2004	Sony CEA	●●◖	83
ATV Offroad Fury	Sony CEA	●●●●	42
⚡ATV Offroad Fury 2	Sony CEA	●●●●	64
ATV Quad Power Racing 2	Acclaim	●●●●	66
⚡Auto Modellista	Capcom	●●◖	69
Backyard Baseball	Atari	●●◖	81
Backyard Wrestling: Don't Try This at Home	Eidos	●●◖	75
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance	Interplay	●●●●◖	52
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II	Interplay	●●●◖	77
Barbarian	Titus	●●	57
Bass Strike Virtual Fishing Tournament	THQ	●◖	51
Batman: Rise of Sin Tzu	Ubisoft	●●	74
Batman: Vengeance	Ubisoft	●●●	51
Battle Engine Aquila	Atari	●●●◖	65
Battlestar Galactica	Vivendi Universal	●●●	76
Beyond Good & Evil	Ubisoft	●●●●	75
Big Mutha Truckers	Empire	●●●	71
Bionicle: The Game	EA Games	●●◖	75
Black & Bruised	Majesco	●●●●	67
Blade II	Activision	●●	62
Blood Omen 2	Eidos	●●●◖	57
BloodRayne	Majesco	●●●◖	63
Bloody Roar 3	Activision	●●●◖	47
Bloody Roar 4	Konami	●	75
Blowout	Majesco	●●●	77
BMX XXX	Acclaim	●◖	65
Bombastic	Capcom	●●◖	72
Breath of Fire: Dragon Quarter	Capcom	●●●●	67
Britney's Dance Beat	THQ	●●●●	58
The Bouncer	Square EA	●●●	42
Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Chaos Bleeds	Sierra/Fox	●●●◖	73
Bujingai: The Forsaken City	Bam	●●●●	82
Burnout	Acclaim	●●●●◖	52
Burnout 2: Point of Impact	Acclaim	●●●●	63

DRIV3R

ALL THE TIMMIES, ALL THE SECRET CARS, AND EVERY LANDMARK


TIMMY #8
TIMMY #6
TIMMY #3
INTERCOASTAL WATERWAY
ATLANTIC OCEAN
FONTAINEBLEAU HOTEL
21
HOTEL
20
DI-LIDO ISLAND
SAN MARINO ISLAND
SAN MARCO ISLAND
TIMMY #9
MIAMI BEACH
TIMMY #10
22 ART DECO DISTRICT
CENTRAL FREEWAYS
8 FREEDOM TOWER
WATSON ISLAND
STAR ISLAND
19 MIAMI CITY HALL
18 POLICE STATION
12 SAFE HOUSE
LITTLE HAVANNA
7 MONORAIL
9 CAFE
5 RED RIVER BAR
CAR C
WAREHOUSE 13
MARINA 16
6 CALITA'S MOTEL
1 ORANGE BOWL
14 DOCKS
BISCAYNE BAY
DODGE ISLAND
TIMMY #7
SOUTH BEACH
17 TANNER'S APARTMENT
STILTSVILLE 15
MIAMI RIVER
DOWNTOWN MIAMI
ARMORY
TIMMY #1
10 BOATHOUSE
TIMMY #4
BILTMORE HOTEL 2
3 WATER TREATMENT FACILITY
23 GATOR'S YACHT
TIMMY #2
CENTRAL FREEWAYS
CAR A
4
COCONUT GROVE
CAR B
TIMMY #5
MALL 11

MIAMI

TIMMIES

#1 House opposite Tanner's apartment
#2 Northeast floating home's planked-off section in Stiltsville
#3 Dirty Dick's boathouse
#4 End of alley in southwest downtown, near river
#5 Garage marked "A1" in Coral Gables
#6 Tico's site, on half-built home's upper level
#7 Water treatment facility's go-kart track gate switch
#8 House south of running track
#9 Under upper stands at Orange Bowl alcove
#10 Elevator at top of Gold Coast Hotel

SECRET CARS

A GO-KART
Go-kart track's pits

B VELOCITY TURBO
Alley between warehouse buildings near river and boat moorings

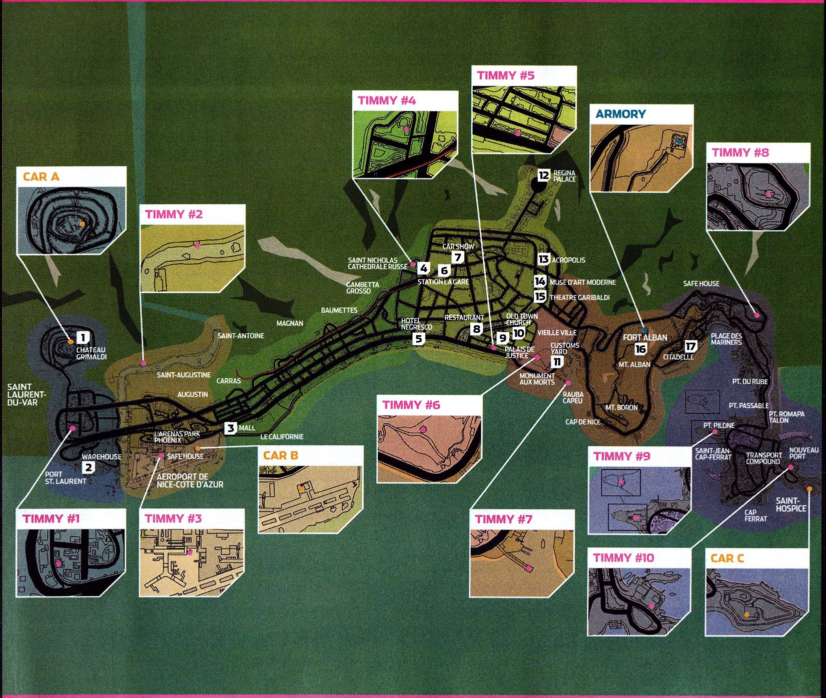
C TT CUATRO SUPERPOWER
Star Island home's garage

ARMORY

Backyard of ranch house near corner of road leading to Biltmore Hotel, opposite water tower

LANDMARKS

1 Orange Bowl
2 Biltmore Hotel
3 Water Treatment Facility
4 Go-Kart Track
5 Red River Bar
6 Calita's Motel
7 Monorail
8 Freedom Tower
9 House of Rock Café
10 Gator's Boathouse
11 Mortain Mall
12 Calita's Safe House
13 Gator's Warehouse
14 Docks
15 Stiltsville
16 Marina
17 Tanner's Apartment
18 Police Station
19 City Hall
20 Gold Coast Hotel
21 Fontainebleau Hotel
22 Art Deco District
23 Gator's Yacht


TIMMY #5
TIMMY #4
ARMORY
TIMMY #8
CAR A
TIMMY #2
12 REGINA PALACE
CAR SHOW 7
SAINT NICHOLAS CATHEDRALE RUSSE 4
6 STATION LA GARE
GAMBETTA GROSSO
13 ACROPOLIS
14 MUSE D'ART MODERNE
15 THEATRE GARIBALDI
SAFE HOUSE
BAUMETTES
MAGNAN
HOTEL NEGRESCO 5
RESTAURANT 8
OLD TOWN CHURCH 10
9 PALAIS DE JUSTICE
VIEILLE VILLE
CUSTOMS YARD 11
MONUMENT AUX MORTS
FORT ALBAN 16
MT. ALBAN
17 CITADELLE
PLAGE DES MARINERS
SAINT-ANTOINE
1 CHATEAU GRIMALDI
SAINT-AUGUSTINE
CARRAS
AUGUSTIN
SAINT LAURENT-DU-VAR
TIMMY #6
RAUBA CAPEU
MT. BORON
PT. DU RUBE
PT. PASSABLE
PT. ROMAPA TALON
CAP DE NICE
PT. PILONE
3 MALL
LE CALIFORNIE
L'ARENAS PARK PHOENIX
WAREHOUSE 2
SAFE HOUSE
PORT ST. LAURENT
AEROPORT DE NICE-COTE D'AZUR
CAR B
SAINT-JEAN-CAP-FERRAT
TRANSPORT COMPOUND
NOUVEAU PORT
TIMMY #9
SAINT-HOSPICE
CAP FERRAT
TIMMY #1
TIMMY #3
TIMMY #7
TIMMY #10
CAR C

NICE

TIMMIES

- **#1** Warehouse off Rue des Vespins
- **#2** North bank of river on the north side of airport
- **#3** Top of airport tower
- **#4** Saint Nicholas Cathedrale Russe
- **#5** Lower floor of set of buildings you can drive across
- **#6** Bandstand at Vieille Ville park hill
- **#7** Rauba Capeu lighthouse
- **#8** Stunt land quarry's west dirt ramp
- **#9** Cave near Pt. Pilone
- **#10** Transport compound by corner hut

SECRET CARS

A CAMPER VAN
Garage at Chateau Grimaldi hill's peak

B DOLCH SCHUB
Fire station at Aeroport De Nice–Côte d'Azur

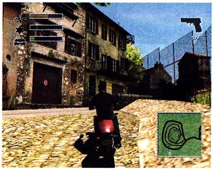
C FORKLIFT TRUCK
Garage at Chapel de St. Hospice

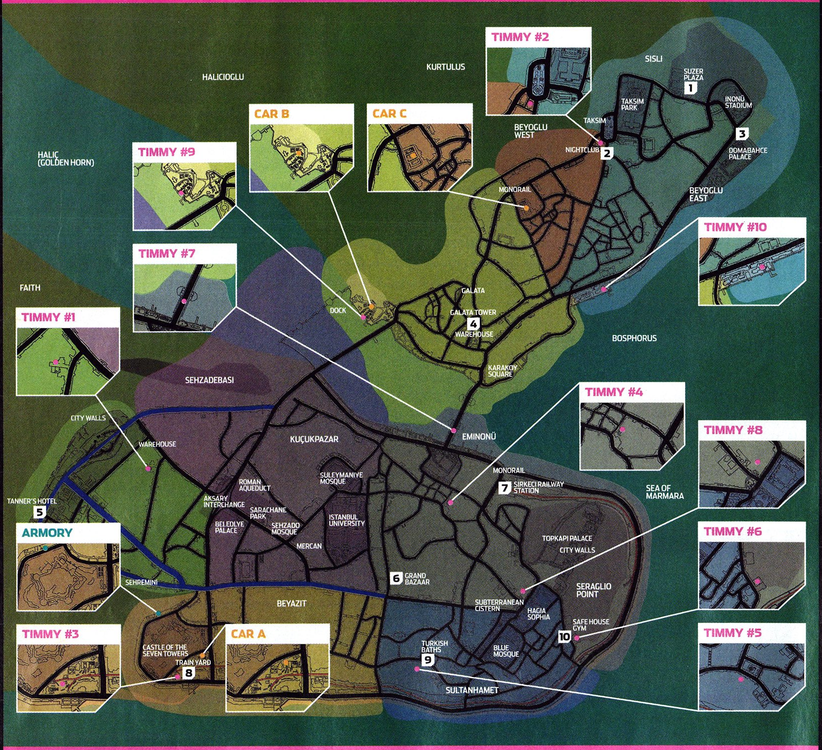
ARMORY

Medieval great room at front of fortress on mountain road to Fort Alban

LANDMARKS

1 Chateau Grimaldi
2 Warehouse
3 Mall
4 Saint Nicholas Cathedrale Russe
5 Hotel Negresco
6 Station la Gare
7 Car Showroom
8 Restaurant
9 Palais de Justice
10 Old Town Church
11 Customs Yard
12 Regina Palace
13 Acropolis
14 Muse d'Art Moderne
15 Theatre Garibaldi
16 Fort Alban
17 Citadelle




TIMMY #2
SISLI
KURTULUS
HALICIOGLU
SUZER PLAZA
1
TAKSIM PARK
INONÜ STADIUM
CAR B
CAR C
TAKSIM
BEYOGLU WEST
3
NIGHTCLUB
2
DOMABAHCE PALACE
TIMMY #9
HALIÇ (GOLDEN HORN)
MONORAIL
BEYOGLU EAST
TIMMY #10
TIMMY #7
FAITH
GALATA
DOCK
GALATA TOWER
4
WAREHOUSE
TIMMY #1
BOSPHORUS
KARAKOY SQUARE
SEHZADEBASI
TIMMY #4
CITY WALLS
EMINONÜ
TIMMY #8
KUÇUKPAZAR
WAREHOUSE
MONORAIL
SULEYMANIYE MOSQUE
ROMAN AQUEDUCT
7
SIRKECI RAILWAY STATION
SEA OF MARMARA
TANNER'S HOTEL
AKSARY INTERCHANGE
5
SARACHANE PARK
ISTANBUL UNIVERSITY
BELEDLYE PALACE
SEHZADO MOSQUE
TOPKAPI PALACE
ARMORY
TIMMY #6
MERCAN
CITY WALLS
6
GRAND BAZAAR
SEHREMINI
SERAGLIO POINT
BEYAZIT
SUBTERRANEAN CISTERN
HAGIA SOPHIA
SAFE HOUSE GYM
TIMMY #3
CAR A
TIMMY #5
10
CASTLE OF THE SEVEN TOWERS
TURKISH BATHS
BLUE MOSQUE
TRAIN YARD
9
8
SULTANHAMET

ISTANBUL

TIMMIES

#1 Fire escape entrance, upstairs in bomb truck warehouse
#2 Nightclub manager's office
#3 Decaying train yard's signal box
#4 End of dead-end alleyway, around houses
#5 Turkish baths' basement
#6 Safe house gym's third floor
#7 Under bridge in second blue shop-front passage, south of bridge entrance
#8 Subterranean cistern's far corner
#9 Hut at Halic River docks
#10 Negatibey Road river warehouses

SECRET CARS

A SPEEDSTER
Main train warehouse shed

B ROADSTER (BUGATTI)
Red cargo container opposite building "Kamsa"

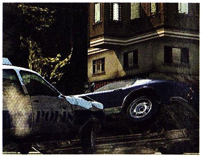
C RACER GT
Middle building at old industrial park

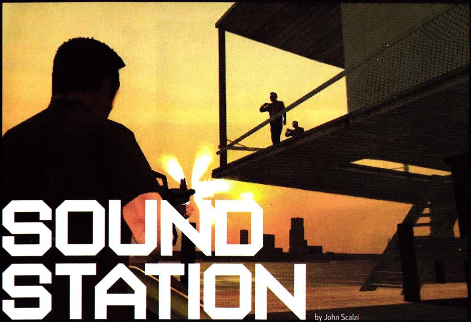
ARMORY

Stone house with cow skull above a brown door, to the right of small, open area

LANDMARKS

1 Suzer Plaza
2 Nightclub
3 Dolmbahçe Palace
4 Galata Tower
5 Tanner's Hotel
6 Grand Bazaar
7 Sirkeci Railway Station
8 Train Yard
9 Turkish Baths
10 Safe House Gym





SOUND STATION

by John Scalzi

MUSIC FROM THE DRIV3R SOUNDTRACK

THE BELLRAYS: *MEET THE BELLRAYS*

If the world were an RPG, *Meet the BellRays* would be a +2 CD of coolness—a CD whose mere presence in your collection would make you appear far more hip to others than you really are. And you'll look even better playing it. It's a riotous mash-up of Detroit-style rock (think Iggy & the Stooges, whom we'll get to in a minute) and soulful singer Lisa Kekaula, whose voice triangulates between Aretha Franklin's, Janis Joplin's, and Joan Armatrading's. If this rock 'n' roll doesn't knock you back off your heels, you must have already been lying down. Trust me, you want to be the first kid on your block to get this one. Note: *Meet* is an import CD that collects tracks from two BellRays CDs: *Grand Fury* and *Let It Blast*. It'd cost you as much to import *Meet* as to get both those CDs off Amazon. So that's a hint.

●●●●◐

LOS HALOS: *LOS HALOS*

My, what a miserable bunch these guys are. "The world is so unkind," they mope on in "Lucifer," the shortest song, at almost six minutes, which comes complete with flutes to go with all its other drones. Yes, Los Halos, your life is *much* worse than that of an Iraqi orphan's. This EP is sort of like what you would get if you were a Sonic Youth and Cure fan but couldn't decide whom you wanted to worship more with your own band—*and* you learned mostly the wrong lessons from each group. What you get is an EP full of whining, droning, repetitious songs that go on well past the point of sensibility. These guys need to tighten up and/or cheer up.

●●◐○○

IGGY & THE STOOGES: *RAW POWER*

Ah, here we are: The original World's Forgotten Boy. The rumor is that when David Bowie was producing *Raw Power*, he thought the album should actually *hurt* the listener when it blasted out of the speakers. Well, 30 years later, it sure doesn't hurt, but it does snarl, writhe, wail, and wallow in feculence as much as it ever did. Iggy Pop is the smack-encrusted lead singer whom Jim Morrison never had the guts to be (and he survived, to boot!), and when he's grinding through "Search and Destroy" and "Your Pretty Face is Going To Hell," you hear the sort of rock 'n' roll presence that so many others have tried and failed to achieve. You can't fake it. Iggy & the Stooges never did.

●●●●●

PHANTOM PLANET: *PHANTOM PLANET*

This is some reasonably catchy guitar-pop tunage from reasonably talented musicians who seem to be having fun making noise that you can move to. This album's got two tunes that go out of their way to catch your ear ("After Hours" and "The Happy Ending"), and the rest loiter around like bland but attractive hangers-on at a pretty decent celebrity afterparty. This is to say you won't remember any of them specifically, but in the aggregate, you remember it was all a pretty good way to waste your time one evening. What more do you want out of your summer, anyway?

●●●○○

THE RAVEONETTES: *WHIP IT ON*

The Raveonettes were touted last year as one of the hip new bands that all the kids would be talking about, but now it's 2004, and I don't hear *any* of the kids talking about them. Why? Well, because they suck, that's why. *Whip It On* has eight songs, each of which sounds exactly like the others: A bored-sounding female singer slacks through her lyrics, while repetitive guitar work and beats slam away in the background. Basically, this would be what the Yeah Yeah Yeahs would sound like if each member were trepanned and had their frontal lobes vigorously scraped. I don't know why you would want that.

●◐○○○

FINDING DRIV3R TUNAGE

You like the tunes in *DRIV3R*, but you get a blank, vacant stare from your local record store clerk when you ask about them. There's a reason for that: Many of the bands featured in *DRIV3R* have albums that haven't been released here in the States. To find them, you'll have to root through your indie record store's small, overpriced import bin—or go online. Here's where you can find CDs from the bands of *DRIV3R*. Bear in mind that with import CDs, you'll pay import prices (i.e., up to double the usual cost of a CD).

MELLOWDRONE
CDEurope cdeurope.com

PHANTOM PLANET
Amazon amazon.com, Rhapsody rhapsody.com, iTunes apple.com/itunes

IGGY & THE STOOGES
Amazon, Rhapsody, iTunes

THE RAVEONETTES
Amazon, Rhapsody, iTunes

SLO-MO
CDEurope, Amazon

SYNTAX
Amazon

OKUNIEV
You can download tracks at their website, www.okuniev.com, for a pound each (about $1.60). You'll need a credit card.

TEDDYBEARS STHLM
Amazon

NARCO
I got nothin' from anyone. They've got a website, but when I wrote this, nothing was there except for a "coming soon" graphic. See if your luck is better: www.narcomusic.co.uk/

LOS HALOS
Amazon, Rhapsody, iTunes, CDBaby cdbaby.com

STATELESS
Amazon, CDEurope

THE BELLRAYS
Amazon, CDEurope, CDBaby

HOPE OF THE STATES
Amazon

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Butt-Ugly Martians: Zoom or Doom!	Crave	●●	73
Cabela's Big Game Hunter	Activision	●●◐	67
Cabela's Dangerous Hunts	Activision	●●◐	76
Cabela's Deer Hunt 2004 Season	Activision	●●◐	74
Capcom vs. SNK 2	Capcom	●●●●◐	51
Carmen Sandiego: The Secret of the Stolen Drums	Bam	●●◐	77
CART Fury	Midway	●	47
Casper: Spirit Dimensions	TDK Mediactive	●●◐	50
Castlevania: Lament of Innocence	Konami	●●●●	74
The Cat in the Hat	Vivendi Universal	●●	76
⚡ Champions of Norrath: Realms of EverQuest	Sony Online	●●●●◐	78
Chaos Legion	Capcom	●●●◐	70
⚡ Chessmaster	Ubisoft	●●●◐	70
Choplifter: Crisis Shield	Xicat	●●●	69
City Crisis	Take-Two	●●●	48
Clock Tower 3	Capcom	●●●	68
Combat Elite: WWII Paratroopers	Acclaim	●●●	83
Colin McRae Rally 3	Codemasters	●●●●●	68
Commandos 2: Men of Courage	Eidos	●●	62
Conflict: Desert Storm	Gotham Games	●◐	63
Conflict: Desert Storm II	Gotham Games	●●●	74
Conflict Zone	Ubisoft	●●◐	63
Contra: Shattered Soldier	Konami	●●●●◐	64
Corvette	Global Star	●●●◐	81
Cool Boarders 2001	Sony CEA	●●●●	46
Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex	Universal	●●●◐	51
Crash Nitro Kart	Vivendi Universal	●●●◐	76
Crazy Taxi	Acclaim	●●●●	46
Crimson Sea 2	Koei	●●●◐	80
Crimson Tears	Capcom	●●●◐	83
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	Ubisoft	●●	74
Culdcept	SNK	●●●◐	75
Dark Angel: Vampire Apocalypse	Metro3D	●◐	49
Dark Cloud	Sony CEA	●●●●◐	46
Dark Cloud 2	Sony CEA	●●●●●	66
Dark Summit	THQ	●●●◐	52
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2	Acclaim	●●●◐	50
DDRMAX	Konami	●●●●	63
DDRMAX 2	Konami	●●●●	74
Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore	Tecmo	●●●●◐	39
Dead to Rights	Namco	●●●	65
Def Jam Vendetta	EA Sports Big	●●●●	67
Defender	Midway	●●●◐	62
⚡ Destruction Derby Arenas	Gathering	●●◐	80
Deus Ex: The Conspiracy	Eidos	●●●●◐	56
Devil May Cry	Capcom	●●●●●	50
Devil May Cry 2	Capcom	●●●	66
Dino Stalker	Capcom	●●●◐	61
Disaster Report	Agetec	●●●◐	65
Disgaea: Hour of Darkness	Atlus	●●●●	72
Disney Golf	EA Games	●●●●	61
Disney's Extreme Skate Adventure	Activision	●●●●	73
Disney's PK: Out of the Shadows	Ubisoft	●●◐	63
Disney's Treasure Planet	Sony CEA	●●●◐	64
Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers	Ubisoft	●●●◐	42
Downforce	Titus	●●	57
Downhill Domination	Sony CEA	●●●●	71
Dr. Muto	Midway	●●◐	63
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai	Atari	●●●◐	65
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2	Atari	●●◐	76
Dragon Rage	3DO	●◐	54
Drakan: The Ancients' Gates	Sony CEA	●●●●	53
Drakengard	Square Enix USA	●●	78
DRIV3R	Atari	●●●◐	83

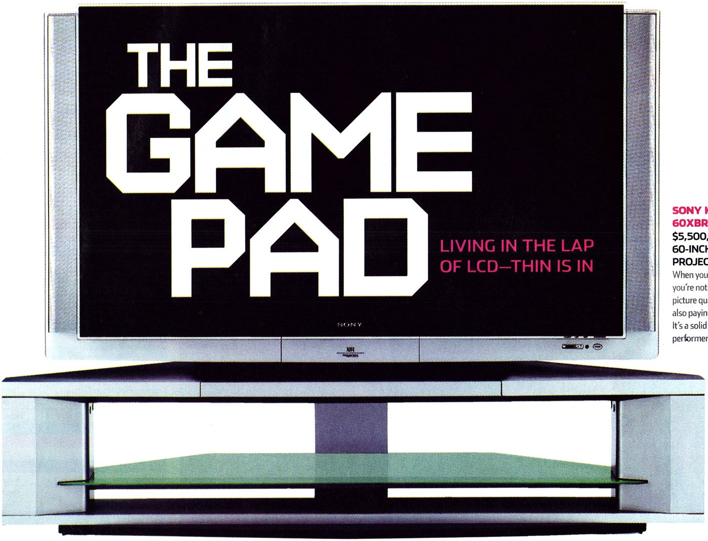
For those who want a little more excitement in this "gigantic city simulation," try pumping out grenades from the launcher at moving cars for classic flying fun. Try these codes at the Main menu.

All weapons	Press R1, L2, □, ○, R1, R2, L2.
All missions	Press L1, R1, L1, L2, □, □, ○.
All vehicles	Press L1, L1, □, ○, L1, R1, ○.
Invincibility	Press □, □, L1, R1, L2, R2, R2. Note: This code does not work in story mode!

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Driven	Bam	●	52
Driving Emotion Type-S	Square EA	●●◐	41
Drome Racers	EA Games	●●◐	64
Dropship	Bam	●●●●	57
Dual Hearts	Atlus	●●●	61

THE GAME PAD

LIVING IN THE LAP OF LCD—THIN IS IN



SONY KDF-60XBR950
$5,500, 60-INCH, REAR PROJECTION
When you buy a Sony, you're not just buying picture quality—you're also paying for style. It's a solid but pricey performer.

You want a brand-new, paper-thin television. You can't afford one, but that doesn't stop you from walking into Best Buy every weekend and weeping openly in the TV section. But every fall there's hope. Most new TV sets get introduced late in the year, and this means good bargains are available now. Sure, you can sink money into the hottest, newest LCDs on the block. But why not save hundreds of dollars instead? Great models are already available, and at this time of year you'll see lots of price drops on last year's TVs. Whether you choose last year's model or the newest gear, now is the time to buy.

Of course, we don't want to mislead you into thinking that these sets are perfect. As in life, there are pros and cons to everything. Our advice: Rip out these pages, bring along your PS2, and test out the sets in the store so you can see which one works best for you.

THE PROS

STYLE There's something to be said for a 2-inch-thick TV that looks good even turned off. This will, after all, be the centerpiece of your home theater. These sets are also mercifully light compared to plasma TVs.

NO BURN-IN This used to be the biggest selling point for buying an LCD set over a plasma one. With current developments, though, burn-in is *almost* a nonissue with the most recent plasmas.

LONGER LIFE Since most thin TVs haven't logged enough mileage in the real world, we can't declare a winner for reliability. For now, though, it's a numbers game, and those numbers say that LCDs last 50,000 to 60,000 hours—years longer than plasma TVs.

VERY BRIGHT PICTURE LCD sets generally have brighter picture quality than plasma TVs, so if you're camping out in a sunny room, this'll be the better choice for you.

BUZZ OFF If you live 6,500 feet above sea level, plasma TVs are the bane of your existence. At high altitudes, the gas inside plasma screens is at a different pressure than the outside air, which causes a buzzing sound.

THE CONS

SIZE MATTERS LCD technology may be improving, but you still can't get that big, fat screen available with a plasma TV. Direct-view panels are as tiny as 13 inches and get as big as 40 inches (well, 46-inch ones are coming out, but you get the idea). Not bad, mind you—but we want more! Rear-projection LCD sets are thicker, but at least they can get as large as 60 inches.

PAINT IT BLACK One critique of LCD panels is that their black levels are a little off. This means that any game that has you lurking in the shadows might be difficult to see. Black levels vary by set (rear projection sets a little more so), so make sure to check this out in the store.

SMEAR CAMPAIGN Lackluster refresh rates can be a pain. If you're playing fast-motion games like *Burnout 3,* there could be extra blurring and color smearing on some sets.

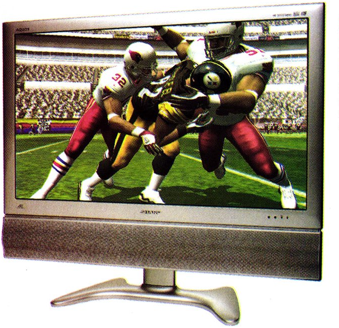
EXPENSIVE AS HELL These sets just don't come cheap, but prices are dropping. For instance, two years ago, most 30-inch LCD TVs cost around $8,000. Now, similar sets are available for less than half that amount. LCDs should get into reasonable price ranges in another year or two. « *Darren Gladstone*

GOT QUESTIONS?
Having problems with that stereo hookup? Can't figure out which television to buy? Then e-mail our resident expert Darren Gladstone at darren_gladstone@ziff-davis.com with a subject line of "Game Pad."

PC TV

WELCOME TO YOUR NEW COMPUTER ROOM

Got a PC in your house? Now put one in your living room. Direct-view LCD sets can double as computer monitors. We've been testing out Dell's W line, and the W3000 30-inch LCD TV works great and has a reasonably crisp widescreen picture. It's also a good deal, considering that this hybrid goes for about $2,700. The only problem with setting this up in any living room: ergonomics. You'll need a wireless keyboard and mouse. Our pick for livin' in high style is Logitech's diNovo Media Desktop, which runs about $400. For useful tips on ergonomics, go to ergo.human.cornell.edu.



SHARP AQUOS LC30HV6U
$3,500, 30-INCH, DIRECT VIEW
This TV is awesome because of its great game-playing performance and, well, sharp image. And the best part? The price has dropped a grand since it came out.

HITACHI 50V710
$3,300, 50-INCH, REAR PROJECTION
It may not floss the style of some of the other guys here, but this box rocks the block with great picture quality.

SONY KDL-32XBR950
$6,000, 32-INCH, DIRECT VIEW
To see this stylish glass-encrusted case is to want it. The only catch is that a pro's touch is required to calibrate it for best performance. But with looks like this, it's easy not to care about that.

SAMSUNG LTP468W
$10,000, 46-INCH, DIRECT VIEW
This is the newest, largest kid on the direct-view block, and we had to include it here. The thing that makes us say, "Holy crap!" here is that it supports 1080p. That isn't a typo—1080p for a ridiculously sharp picture. Now we just need games that support it.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Dynasty Tactics	Koei	●●●●◖	61
Dynasty Tactics 2	Koei	●●●●	74
Dynasty Warriors 2	Koei	●●●●	38
Dynasty Warriors 3	Koei	●●●●	52
Dynasty Warriors 3: Xtreme Legends	Koei	●●●◖	65
Dynasty Warriors 4	Koei	●●●●◖	68
Dynasty Warriors 4: Xtreme Legends	Koei	●●●◖	75
Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future	Acclaim	●●◖	56
Egg Mania: Eggstreme Madness	Kemco	●●◖	61
⚡eJay Clubworld	Crave	●●	73
Endgame	Empire	●●	59
Enter the Matrix	Atari	●●●	71
Ephemeral Fantasia	Konami	●◖	49
Escape From Monkey Island	**LucasArts**	**●●●●●**	**46**
⚡ESPN College Hoops	Sega Sports	●●●◖	76
ESPN International Track & Field	Konami	●●●	39
ESPN International Winter Sports 2002	Konami	●●●●	54
⚡ESPN Major League Baseball	Sega Sports	●●●◖	80
ESPN MLS Extra Time	Konami	●●	44
ESPN National Hockey Night	Konami	●◖	45
ESPN NBA 2Night	Konami	●●	42
ESPN NBA 2Night 2002	Konami	●●●	56
⚡ESPN NBA Basketball	**Sega Sports**	**●●●●●**	**75**
⚡ESPN NHL Hockey	Sega Sports	●●●●◖	73
⚡ESPN NFL Football	Sega Sports	●●●●◖	72
ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding	Konami	●●●	41
ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding 2002	Konami	●●●	53
ESPN X Games Skateboarding	Konami	●●●●	49
Eternal Ring	Agetec	●●	38
Eve of Extinction	Eidos	●●◖	56
Everblue 2	Capcom	●●●	66
Evergrace	Agetec	●●	39
⚡EverQuest Online Adventures	Sony Online	●●◖	66
⚡EverQuest Online Adventures: Frontiers	Sony Online	●●●◖	77
Evil Dead: A Fistful of Boomstick	THQ	●●●	70
Evil Twin	Ubisoft	●●	52
Evolution Skateboarding	Konami	●●◖	63
Evolution Snowboarding	Konami	●	65
Extermination	Sony CEA	●●◖	48
Extreme-G III	Acclaim	●●●●	50
EyeToy: Groove	Sony CEA	●●●●◖	80
F1 2001	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**52**
F1 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	60
F1 Career Challenge	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**71**
F1 Championship	Ubisoft	●●●●	43
F1 Championship Season 2000	EA Sports	●●◖	41
Fallout: Brotherhood of Steel	Interplay	●●◖	78
Fantavision	Sony CEA	●●●●	40
Fatal Frame	Tecmo	●●●●	55
Fatal Frame 2: Crimson Butterfly	Tecmo	●●●●	77
Ferrari F355 Challenge	Sega	●●	61
FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer	EA Sports	●●●●◖	39
FIFA 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	51
FIFA Soccer 2003	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**63**
⚡FIFA Soccer 2004	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**75**
⚡Fight Night 2004	**EA Sports**	**●●●●**	**80**

UNLOCKABLES

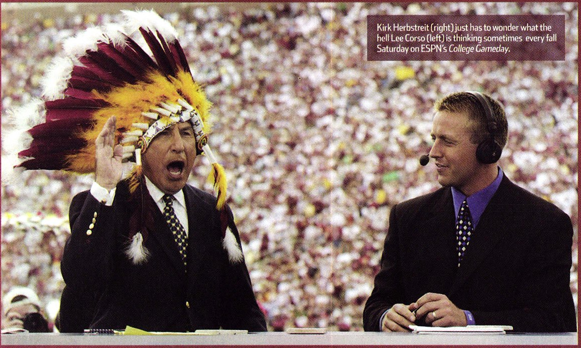
The EA cover curse has now moved from football to boxing, as Antonio Tarver will testify to after knocking Roy Jones Jr. into the middle of next week. No matter—we've got a host of codes for this game, including the obligatory "big head" code.

All venues	At the Main menu, highlight My Corner and press ←, ←, ←, →, →, →, ←, →, →
Big heads	At the Main menu, highlight My Corner and press ←, →, ←, →, ←, →, ←
Big Tigger	In the Record Book menu, go to Most Wins and press ↑, ↑
Small fighters	At the Main menu, highlight Play Now and press ←, →, ←, →, ←

Fighter Maker 2	Agetec	●◖	64
Final Fantasy X	**Square EA**	**●●●●●**	**53**
Final Fantasy X-2	**Square Enix USA**	**●●●●●**	**75**
⚡Final Fantasy XI	**Square Enix USA**	**●●●●●**	**78**
Finding Nemo	THQ	●●●◖	71
Fireblade	Midway	●●◖	59
Fisherman's Challenge	Konami	●●	67
Ford Racing 2	Gotham Games	●●◖	76
Forever Kingdom	Agetec	●◖	53
Formula One 2001	Sony CEA	●●◖	50
Freaky Flyers	Midway	●●●◖	72

NCAA FOOTBALL 2005

COMMENTATORS LEE CORSO AND KIRK HERBSTREIT TALK COLLEGE FOOTBALL WITH US



Kirk Herbstreit (right) just has to wonder what the hell Lee Corso (left) is thinking sometimes every fall Saturday on ESPN's *College Gameday.*

OPM If I want to destroy everyone in *NCAA Football 2005,* what are the teams I should pick?

KIRK HERBSTREIT It's the usual, isn't it? USC, LSU, Oklahoma...Florida State...Georgia. I think it's pretty early to figure out who are the hidden gems. Lee probably won't say, but I think Florida State could be pretty good this year.

LEE CORSO From a coach's standpoint, I don't think you really know until after the first game. There are so many intangibles. There might be a freshman who comes out of nowhere and then all of a sudden—*boom!*—becomes a great player. Also, how many kids get hurt in the preseason. I would say after the first week, you can pretty much tell who the good teams are.

"AT EVERY SINGLE COLLEGE CAMPUS WE GO TO, THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WHO TALK TO US ABOUT PLAYING THE GAME."

OPM Crowd noise is a big factor in *NCAA 2005.* What would you say the loudest stadiums are?

LC I think Autzen Stadium. Per person, the Oregon stadium is the loudest stadium I've ever been in. The fact that it's so low to the ground doesn't allow the sound to escape. Michigan's stadium is not very loud because the sound goes right out.

KH I would say No. 1 for me is The Swamp, ever since they've renovated the stadium. We went to last year's Florida-Florida State game, and I don't think I've been to a louder stadium since. They get their student body right there behind the visitor, and the crowd noise stays in that stadium.

MORE TO COME
Keep your eyes open for the entire interview this August on 1UP.com.

OPM In last year's game, EA had planned for us to see goalposts come down after a home upset victory, but the NCAA nixed that at the last minute. What do you think of that?

LC I don't agree with them—I think that that's all part of the game of football and the excitement. Rarely does a person get hurt tearing down the goalposts. It's what happens after that that they can't control, and that's the partying and drinking, and it's usually happening outside the stadium.

KH You're better off not trying to stop 'em. Just let 'em come out and get it over with.

OPM So Kirk, how different do you see *Madden* and *NCAA* as videogames?

KH I think the only difference is the play calling. As far as the game experience, it's just your preference of style of football. There's more to offer the college football fan with our game.

OPM Lee, what do you think of the *NCAA* game from what you've seen of it?

LC I think it's wonderful—I'd love to be able to play it! I mean, I have never played it, but I love watching Kirk play. At every single college campus we go to, there are thousands of people who talk to us about playing the game. [*In a mock crying voice*] And I'd just like once to be able to play it myself. Guys at the campuses will come up and challenge Kirk. "C'mon, let's play!"

KH The players wanna play everywhere we go.

OPM So Kirk, do you usually beat 'em?

KH Uhh...you know what? Now that I have three kids, my game reps have been diminished. I hold my own. I'm like the Little Engine That Could. These guys are all throwin' the ball all over the place, and I'm still establishing the run and playing good defense—like my Big Ten background. I typically make a good game out of it.

OPM Yeah, I can buy the kid excuse. How does doing voiceover work for the fourth time compare with doing it for the first time three games ago?

KH We have so much fun doing it, we kind of get caught up in it. People think, "How boring is it just to keep reading all those lines?" But because we're doing it together, we don't necessarily look at it as, "Man, we're just reading lines...." We kind of try to, believe it or not, play along and get into character and act like we're really doing a game.

LC I think you've gotta give [credit to] the people that write it. It's really scary how similar it is to what we really talk like. They do a great job of placing our personalities into words.

KH Yeah, I think they study the tapes from the Thursday night games that we do and come up with some things that we've actually said.

OPM Do you do much ad-libbing?

LC Oh, yeah. Especially on the sound effects—that's my favorite. [*laughs*]

OPM Sega has the ESPN license. Does it feel weird working for a competitor for this game?

LC You know what, I'm gonna give you my agent's number! [*laughs*]

KH I think we were just excited to be involved with EA and to be involved with the game. I love ESPN—I love working at ESPN—and I respect what they're trying to do with their videogames. But as a gamer myself, the fact that I had a chance to be involved with a game that I was already playing had probably as much to do with my enthusiasm as anything.

LC When they called me about doing this, they told me that this was going to be a first-class, major-league thing and that they'd like to have my name put on it. And that was all I needed.

OPM Does Chris Fowler ever feel left out?

[*Three-second pause*]

LC Notice the silence.

KH You know what? Lee and I are independent contractors for ESPN; Chris Fowler is a full-fledged ESPN employee. So he's out of the mix, unfortunately for him. «

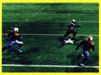
Photo by Getty Images

NCAA REPLAY

USING THE NEW ADVANTAGES TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

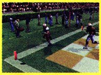
How can I best use the home-field advantage?

The quarterback is the only position player on offense who handles the ball on every snap, so it makes perfect sense to **focus your pressure on the quarterback.** After two unsuccessful running plays, the Nebraska quarterback faces third and goal against a tough Tennessee defense and an even tougher Tennessee crowd at Neyland Stadium. As the quarterback calls the signals, our Tennessee linebacker works the crowd into a fever pitch, maxing out the Stadium Pulse meter.

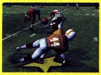


From the 4-3 defense, we **call the Thunder Green,** a blitz package that sends two linebackers up the middle. The Nebraska five-man front cannot handle the pressure, and both linebackers close in on the quarterback. With the crowd screaming and a couple of 250-pounders bearing down on him, the Nebraska quarterback gets happy feet and bolts from the pocket.

Note: It is possible for the Stadium Pulse meter to reach maximum level without a defensive player inciting the crowd. However, if the fans are a little subdued after a couple of successful plays by the offense, it is important to pump up the crowd to get them back in the game.



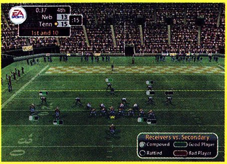
The blitzing linebackers and a noisy crowd force the quarterback into making an errant throw. It is possible for the crowd noise alone to upset an inexperienced quarterback (see the matchup stick section below), but a veteran will be able to block out the noise and make a good decision. This is why a strong pass rush is critical in pressure situations.



Another important way to utilize your home-field advantage is to **try to strip the ball from kickoff and punt returners.** As your coverage team closes in on the return man, switch to the closest defender and then hit the Strip button just as you make contact. The crowd is usually noisy on kicks, increasing the chance for jangled nerves, which contributes to a fumble.

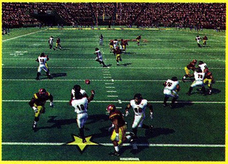
What's the best way to use the matchup stick?

The matchup stick lets you check receivers versus secondary, offensive line versus defensive line, and backfield versus linebackers. All matchups are important, but **deficiencies in pass coverage are the easiest and most productive to exploit.** Using the matchup stick before the snap, we see a strong Nebraska secondary except for the cornerback playing opposite our tight slot receiver on the right. Not only is he a bad player (red bar), but he's also rattled (black circle). Our receiver gets inside the defender and makes an easy reception.

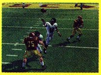


What do I do when I'm overmatched?

If you want to put your football skills to the test, try taking a Division 1-AA team such as Grambling State against the Division 1-A powerhouse USC. You'll be overmatched on offense and defense, but no matter how tough an opponent is, the opposing defense must still cover the entire field. On offense, you can expect a brutal pass rush, so your quarterback will have precious few seconds to complete a pass. However, this doesn't suggest you should never call a long pass play. On the contrary, **sending your receivers deep clears out the short zones,** and if you can avoid the rush, you should find open receivers underneath the coverage. The PA Cross Post pictured above begins with a play-action fake that freezes the linebackers. While the wide receivers run deep crossing patterns, the halfback sneaks out of the backfield and runs across the field to the sideline. Release the ball as soon as he makes his break from the linebacker for a high-percentage completion. This type of passing play will let you move the ball against an aggressive and talented defense. A few completions underneath forces the defense to play more man coverage, which in turn presents opportunities to go deep.



On defense, you need to **strike a balance between defending the run and the pass,** which means calling mostly combination zone/man or zone defenses. Blitz with extreme caution against a superb passing attack such as USC's because you open yourself up to single coverage, which usually produces an easy touchdown for an alert quarterback.



Instead of straight man defense, **try the 4-3 Cover 2 Man.** This is a good first- or second-down defense that protects against the run, as well as the long and short pass. On this play, the deep zone defenders force the quarterback to look underneath, where the linebackers are flooding the field with man coverage. When the offense faces third and long, keep your four-man rush, but go to a nickel or dime zone defense to create more double-team situations.

COMPLEX GAMEPLAY

"If sorting through dull management screens for 20 or 30 minutes as you strategize between each battle isn't your idea of fun, then this is by no means the game for you."

Chris Baker

WHAT ELSE MATTERS?

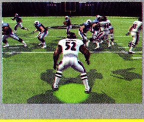
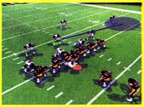
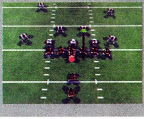
"It's a revolutionary game design, a perfect showcase for the system, and a must-have for anyone's library—but more important, it's simply a beautiful, challenging, enthralling game."

Joe Rybicki

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Freedom Fighters	EA Games	○○○○○	73
Freekstyle	EA Sports Big	○○○○	59
Freestyle Metal X	Midway	●●●	71
Frequency	Sony CEA	●●●◖	52
Frogger: The Great Quest	Konami	●◖	53
Frogger's Adventure: The Rescue	Konami	●●◖	76
» Front Mission 4	Square Enix	●●●●	82
Fugitive Hunter	Encore	●	76
Funkmaster Flex's Digital Hitz Factory	XS Games	●●●●	76
Fur Fighters: Viggo's Revenge	Acclaim	●●●	46
Futurama	Vivendi Universal	●●◖	72
Future Tactics: The Uprising	Crave	●●●◖	81
G1 Jockey 3	Koei	●●●◖	69
Gadget Racers	Conspiracy	●●●◖	50
Galactic Wrestling Featuring Ultimate Muscle	Bandai	●●◖	82
Galerians: Ash	Sammy	●◖	66
Gallop Racer	Tecmo	●●	48
Gallop Racer 2003: A New Breed	Tecmo	●●●	69
Gauntlet: Dark Legacy	Midway	●●●◖	46
The Getaway	Sony CEA	●●●●	66
Giants: Citizen Kabuto	Interplay	●●●◖	51
Gitaroo-Man	Koei	●●●◖	53
Gladiator: Sword of Vengeance	Acclaim	●●	75
Gladius	LucasArts	●●●●	74
Goblin Commander: Unleash the Horde	Jaleco	●●◖	76
GoDai: Elemental Force	3DO	●◖	54
Gradius III and IV	Konami	●●◖	39
Gran Turismo 3: A-spec	Sony CEA	●●●●●	46
Grand Prix Challenge	Atari	●●●◖	68
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City	Rockstar	○○○○○	63
Grand Theft Auto III	Rockstar	●●●●●	52
Grandia II	Ubisoft	●●●◖	53
Grandia Xtreme	Enix	●●●◖	62
Gravity Games Bike: Street, Vert, Dirt	Midway	◖	61
The Great Escape	Gotham Games	●●●◖	72
GTC Africa	Majesco	●●◖	58
Guilty Gear X	Majesco/Sammy	●●●●	51
Guilty Gear X2	Sammy	●●●●	66
Gungrave	Sega	●●●◖	61
Gungriffon Blaze	Working Designs	●●●◖	39
Half-Life	Sierra	○○○○○	51
Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup	EA Games	●●●	75
Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone	EA Games	●◖	76
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	EA Games	●●●◖	64
Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban	EA Games	●●●●	82
Harvest Moon: Save the Homeland	Natsume	●●●●	51
Haunted Mansion	TDK	●●●	77
Haven: Call of the King	Midway	●●●◖	64
Headhunter	Acclaim	●●●	57
Herdy Gerdy	Eidos	●●●	56
Heroes of Might and Magic	3DO	●●◖	46
Hidden Invasion	Conspiracy	●●●	60
High Heat MLB 2002	3DO	●●●●	44
High Heat MLB 2003	3DO	●●●●◖	55
High Heat MLB 2004	3DO	○○○○○	67
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin	Eidos	○○○○◖	63
Hitman: Contracts	Eidos	●●●●◖	81
The Hobbit	Vivendi Universal	●●●◖	76
Hot Shots Golf 3	Sony CEA	○○○○	55
Hot Wheels: Velocity X	THQ	●●◖	64
The Hulk	Vivendi Universal	●●●●	70
Hunter: The Reckoning–Wayward	Interplay	●●◖	72
Hypersonic Xtreme	Majesco	●●◖	67
I-Ninja	Namco	●●●◖	75
» Ico	Sony CEA	○○○○○	50
Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb	LucasArts	●●●	71
Indy Car Series	Codemasters	●●●	71
Intellivision Lives!	Crave	●●●◖	77
Island Extreme Stunts	EA Games	●●●◖	65
The Italian Job	Eidos	●●	72
Jade Cocoon 2	Ubisoft	●●●◖	53
Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy	Sony CEA	●●●●●	52
Jak II	Sony CEA	●●●◖	74
James Bond 007: Agent Under Fire	EA Games	○○○○	52
James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing	EA Games	●●●●◖	79
James Bond 007: NightFire	Activision	●●●●◖	64
James Cameron's Dark Angel	Sierra	●●	65

MADDEN NFL 2005

CRUSH THE COMPETITION BY LEARNING TO USE THIS YEAR'S NEW ADDITIONS

WHEN TO USE	WHEN NOT TO USE
HIT STICK • EA Sports has added a new feature to this year's *Madden 2005* called the hit stick. Using the right analog stick, you can unleash wicked shots and really lay the smack down on the offense, preventing offensive shoot-outs. In fact, one of the best ways to break up the deep ball is to take control of a safety and drop him into deep coverage. If you practice enough, you can get into position to deliver a crushing blow. Get back quickly, then use the Strafe button to square up. Wait for the ball to get close and flick the hit stick.	• By selling out to a hit-stick tackle, there is a chance that you will miss and give up the big play. Player matchups play a part in the equation, so bringing up a much smaller safety to put a hit on a bruising back really isn't a good idea.
BLITZ • When the offense shows a run up the gut or to the outside and you don't have a defense called to stop the run. • To overload one side of the defensive line. Sending more pass rushers than what the offense can handle often results in hurried throws or sacks. • When your team has linebackers or defensive backs that can get to the quarterback quickly. • The defensive line can also be hot routed to blitz. Using the defensive Playmaker blitz hot route changes the way the defensive lineman rushes in case you don't like the angle he's taking.	• If a defender is supposed to be covering a receiver, unless there's another defender who can cover the receiver. The same goes for defenders in zone coverage.
ZONE • If a receiver is sent in motion and the defense is in man lock, then quickly press Up on the defender so he plays zone. • There may be times when a linebacker is blitzing and areas of the field are wide open. To cover the vacated area, drop a lineman in his place. This is especially effective when dropping defensive tackles over the middle while you take control of the middle linebacker and blitz him outside. You get a faster defense rushing the quarterback without sacrificing too much zone coverage underneath. • There may be times when you want to drop a cornerback into deep zone coverage when playing Cover 2 Zone. Say you come out in the 4-3 Cover 2 Zone with the left and right cornerbacks playing the flats. If the offense is lined up on the far left side of the hash mark, drop the right cornerback into deep zone coverage. Most players will not throw to the short side because there is not much room to work with. Have the right cornerback drop back into deep zone then use the safety coverage audible shift to shade the free safety and strong safety to the left side. The coverage now changes from Cover 2 Zone to Cover 3 Zone.	• In short-yardage situations. There is no sense in dropping a linebacker or defensive back away from the line of scrimmage. You want them to react to the ball as soon as it is snapped.
QB SPY • Spying on athletic quarterbacks prevents them from taking off and running, unless you put a linebacker with a 72 speed rating on an quarterback with a 80 speed rating—you're defeating the purpose of spying the quarterback. • Defending against pass routes over the middle.  < Ray Lewis was originally in zone coverage, but now he spies the quarterback.	• If a quarterback does not have the wheels to take off, unless you plan on using it to stop drags and crossing routes. • Having a player spy who is also covering a receiver in man coverage is risky unless another defender is also covering that receiver. The one exception is if the player is covering the fullback.
FLATS • If the offense is abusing the flats with running backs or tight ends. Playmaking a defensive end to play the flats can be effective, but it also takes away from the pass rush. • Stopping the outside run. Often defenders will get outside quicker since their assignment is to play the flats.  < While the defender is selected, push Right on the right stick.	• If another defender is already defending the flats, or if the offense has been pounding the ball inside.
QB CONTAIN • For containing the quarterback in the pocket and to counter players who use the step up, step back method.  < While the defender is selected, push Down twice on the right stick.	• If the offense is running the ball with a halfback or fullback.

D-FENSE! D-FENSE!
Learn how to effectively use the new defensive features to cause fumbles and shut down the offense in key situations.

CREATING TURNOVERS

You will see more penetration by the defense this year, especially on running plays. This gives you many chances to use the hit stick to make a highlight-reel play.

Get your middle linebacker into position and use the hit stick to put a big hit on the running back. The ball carrier may still hold on to the ball, but if he takes too many big hits, he'll be sitting on the bench.

INDIVIDUAL DEFENSIVE PLAYMAKER HOT ROUTES

Madden provides even greater control while playing defense by allowing you to use Playmaker control to give individual defenders new assignments. This new feature allows you to stop money plays before they even happen. In this section, we break down all five individual defensive Playmaker hot routes.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Jeopardy!	Atari	●●◐	77
Jeremy McGrath Supercross World	Acclaim	●	53
Jet X20	Sony CEA	●●	63
Jonny Moseley Mad Trix	3DO	●◐	54
Judge Dredd: Dredd vs. Death	Evolved Games	●●◐	80
The Jungle Book: Rhythm n' Groove	Ubisoft	●●●	69
Jurassic Park: Operation Genesis	Universal Int.	●●●●◐	68
K-1 World Grand Prix	Konami	●●	71
Karaoke Revolution	Konami	●●●●	75
Karaoke Revolution Volume 2	Konami	●●●●◐	83
Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer	Activision	●●●◐	61
Kengo: Master of Bushido	Crave	●●●	42
Kessen	EA Games	●●●	39
Kessen II	Koei	●●●	51
kill.switch	Namco	●●●●◐	75
Kinetica	Sony CEA	●●●●◐	50
The King of Fighters 2000/2001	Bandai	●●◐	76
The King of Route 66	Sega	●●●	67
King's Field: The Ancient City	Agetec	●●	55
Kingdom Hearts	Square EA	●●●●◐	61
Klonoa 2: Lunatea's Veil	Namco	●●●●◐	47
Knockout Kings 2001	EA Sports	●●●●	42
Knockout Kings 2002	EA Sports	●●●●	55
Kya: Dark Lineage	Atari	●●◐	76
La Pucelle: Tactics	Mastiff	●●●●	81
Le Mans 24 Hours	Infogrames	●●◐	48
Legacy of Kain: Defiance	Eidos	●●◐	76
Legaia 2: Duel Saga	Fresh Games	●●●	63
The Legend of Alon D'ar	Ubisoft	●◐	54
Legends of Wrestling	Acclaim	●●◐	53
Legends of Wrestling II	Acclaim	●●●	65
Legion: The Legend of Excalibur	Midway	●●●	59
Lego Racers 2	Lego Media	●●◐	51
Lethal Skies	Sammy	●●●	58
Lethal Skies II	Sammy	●●●◐	74
Looney Tunes: Back in Action	EA Games	●	76
The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring	Black Label	●●●◐	63
The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers	EA Games	●●●●◐	63
⚡The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King	EA Games	●●●●●	75
Lowrider	Jaleco	●◐	77
Lupin the 3rd: Treasure of the Sorcerer King	Bandai	●●●◐	78
Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter	Vivendi Universal	●●	71
Mad Maestro!	Eidos/Fresh	●●●	56
Madden NFL 2001	EA Sports	●●●●◐	38
Madden NFL 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◐	48
⚡Madden NFL 2003	EA Sports	●●●●●	60
⚡Madden NFL 2004	EA Sports	●●●●●	72
⚡Madden NFL 2005	EA Sports	●●●●◐	83
Mafia	Gathering	●●●◐	79
Magic Pengel: The Quest for Color	Agetec	●●●●	69
Manhunt	Rockstar	●●●◐	76
The Mark of Kri	Sony CEA	●●●	59
Marvel vs. Capcom 2	Capcom	●●●●	61
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2	Activision	●●●●	60
Max Payne	Rockstar	●●●●	53
Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne	Rockstar	●●●◐	77
Maximo: Ghosts to Glory	Capcom	●●●◐	54
Maximo vs. Army of Zin	Capcom	●●●●	77
MDK2 Armageddon	Interplay	●●●◐	45
Medal of Honor: Frontline	EA Games	●●●●●	58
⚡Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	EA Games	●●●◐	76
Mega Man Anniversary Collection	Capcom	●●●◐	83
Mega Man X7	Capcom	●●●◐	74
Men in Black II: Alien Escape	Infogrames	●●◐	60
Metal Arms: Glitch in the System	Vivendi Universal	●●●●	75
Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty	Konami	●●●●●	51
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance	Konami	●●●●●	67
Metropolismania	Natsume	●●●	61
Midnight Club	Rockstar	●●●●	39
⚡Midnight Club II	Rockstar	●●●●●	67
Midway Arcade Treasures	Midway	●●●◐	76
Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing	Codemasters	●	58
Minority Report	Activision	●●◐	65
Mission: Impossible–Operation Surma	Atari	●●	77
Mister Mosquito	Eidos/Fresh	●●●◐	56
MLB 2004	Sony CEA	●●●	67
⚡MLB 2005	Sony CEA	●●●◐	80
MLB SlugFest 20-03	Midway	●●●●	59
MLB SlugFest 20-04	Midway	●●●●	67
⚡MLB SlugFest: Loaded	Midway	●●●◐	83
Mobile Light Force 2	XS Games	●●●◐	69
Mobile Suit Gundam: Encounters in Space	Bandai	●	75
Mobile Suit Gundam: Federation vs. Zeon	Bandai	●●●◐	61
Mobile Suit Gundam: Journey to Jaburo	Bandai	●	48
Mobile Suit Gundam: Zeonic Front	Bandai	●●●	54
Mojo!	Crave	●●◐	73
Monopoly Party	Infogrames	●●●	65
Monster 4x4: Masters of Metal	Ubisoft	●●◐	77
Monster Rancher 3	Tecmo	●●●●	50
Monster Rancher 4	Tecmo	●●●◐	75
Monsters, Inc.	Sony CEA	●●●◐	55
Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance	Midway	●●●●	64
MotoGP	Namco	●●●●	39
MotoGP2	Namco	●●●●◐	53
MotoGP3	Namco	●●●●◐	67
Motor Mayhem	Infogrames	●●●	47
MTV Music Generator 2	Codemasters	●●●	46
MTV Music Generator 3: This Is the Remix	Codemasters	●●●◐	82
MTV's Celebrity Deathmatch	Gotham Games	●◐	76
⚡MTX: Mototrax	Activision	●●◐	80
The Mummy Returns	Universal	●◐	52
Music Maker	Magix	●●●●	69
MVP Baseball 2003	EA Sports	●●●◐	67
⚡MVP Baseball 2004	EA Sports	●●●●◐	80
MX 2002 Featuring Ricky Carmichael	THQ	●●●●	47
MX Rider	Infogrames	●●●◐	52
MX Superfly Featuring Ricky Carmichael	THQ	●●●◐	59
⚡My Street	Sony CEA	●●●	67
Myst III: Exile	Ubisoft	●●●◐	63
Mystic Heroes	Koei	●●◐	64
MX Unleashed	THQ	●●●	79
Namco Museum	Namco	●●●◐	53
NASCAR 2001	EA Sports	●●◐	40
NASCAR Heat	Infogrames	●●●●	47
NASCAR Thunder 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◐	51
NASCAR Thunder 2003	EA Sports	●●●●◐	62
⚡NASCAR Thunder 2004	EA Sports	●●●●●	73
NASCAR: Dirt to Daytona	Infogrames	●●●◐	63
Naval Ops: Warship Gunner	Koei	●●●	71
NBA 2K2	Sega Sports	●●●●●	53
⚡NBA 2K3	Sega Sports	●●●●●	63
NBA Ballers	Midway Sports	●●●●	80

CAN'T GET ENOUGH MTV CRIBS?

Enter these codes under the Phraseology menu for all your favorite baller's pimped-out palaces.

UNLOCKABLE	CODE
Allen Iverson's alternate gear	killer crossover
Allen Iverson's studio	the answer
Alonzo Mourning	zo
Amare Stoudemire	rising sun
Baron Davis	stylin & profilin
Ben Wallace's alternate gear	radio controlled cars
Bill Russell	celtics dynasty
Bill Walton	towers of power
Chris Webber	24 seconds
Clyde Drexler	clyde the glide
Darryl Dawkins	rim wrecker
Dikembe Mutombo	in the paint
Dominique Wilkins	dunk fest
Elton Brand	rebound
George Gervin	the ice man cometh
Jalen Rose	bring it
Jason Kidd	pass the rock
Jason Williams	give and go
Jerry Stackhouse's alternate gear	stop drop and roll
John Stockton	court vision
Julius Erving	one on one
Karl Malone	special delivery
Karl Malone's Devonshire estate	ice house
Kevin Garnett's alternate gear	boss hoss
Kevin McHale	holla back
Kobe Bryant's alternate gear	Japanese steak

NO REAL SURPRISE

"If you like arcade b-ball, you should pick up *NBA Ballers* without hesitation, especially if you even remotely like any games in the *NBA Jam* series."

Giancarlo Varanini

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
NBA Hoopz	Midway	●●●	44
NBA Jam 2004	Acclaim	●●◐	75
NBA Live 2001	EA Sports	●●●	42
NBA Live 2002	EA Sports	●●◐	51
⚡NBA Live 2003	EA Sports	●●●●	63
⚡NBA Live 2004	EA Sports	●●●●◐	75
NBA ShootOut 2001	Sony CEA	●●◐	44
NBA ShootOut 2003	Sony CEA	●●●	63
⚡NBA ShootOut 2004	Sony CEA	●●●	75
NBA Starting Five	Konami	●●◐	63
NBA Street	EA Sports Big	●●●●●	47
NBA Street Vol. 2	EA Sports Big	●●●●●	68
⚡NCAA College Basketball 2K3	Sega Sports	●●●●	64
NCAA College Football 2K3	Sega Sports	●●◐	60
NCAA Final Four 2001	Sony CEA	●	41
NCAA Final Four 2002	Sony CEA	●◐	52
NCAA Final Four 2003	Sony CEA	●●◐	64
⚡NCAA Final Four 2004	Sony CEA	●●	76
NCAA Football 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◐	48
NCAA Football 2003	EA Sports	●●●●●	60
⚡NCAA Football 2004	EA Sports	●●●●●	71
⚡NCAA Football 2005	EA Sports	●●●●◐	83

UNLOCK ALL-TIME AND MASCOT TEAMS

All-time teams	In campus challenge mode, collect 48 pennants to unlock the all-time teams for use in the play now mode.
Mascot teams	In campus challenge mode, collect 70 mascot team pennants to unlock various fuzzy creatures for use in the play now mode.

ROWDY CROWD

"As the home team, you can help frenzy the crowd, both by kicking ass on the field and by hitting L2 at the line on defense. Just don't start sucking—fans can be fickle, you know."

Chris Baker

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
NCAA GameBreaker 2001	Sony CEA	●◐	41
NCAA GameBreaker 2003	Sony CEA	●●	61
⚡NCAA GameBreaker 2004	Sony CEA	●●◐	73
NCAA March Madness 2002	EA Sports	●●●	53
NCAA March Madness 2003	EA Sports	●●●	64
⚡NCAA March Madness 2004	EA Sports	●●●●	76
Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	EA Games	●●●●●	62
⚡Need for Speed Underground	EA Games	●●●●◐	76
NFL 2K2	Sega Sports	●●●◐	52
⚡NFL 2K3	Sega Sports	●●●●◐	60
NFL Blitz 20-02	Midway	●●●●	55
NFL Blitz 20-03	Midway	●●●◐	60
⚡NFL Blitz Pro	Midway Sports	●●●	74
NFL GameDay 2001	Sony CEA	●	40
NFL GameDay 2002	Sony CEA	●◐	53
⚡NFL GameDay 2003	Sony CEA	●●◐	61
⚡NFL GameDay 2004	Sony CEA	●●●	73
NFL Quarterback Club 2001	Acclaim	●●◐	50
⚡NFL Street	EA Sports Big	●●●●◐	78
NHL 2001	EA Sports	●●●●	38
NHL 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◐	50
NHL 2003	EA Sports	●●●◐	63
⚡NHL 2004	EA Sports	●●●●	73
NHL 2K3	Sega Sports	●●●●●	64
NHL FaceOff 2001	Sony CEA	●●●◐	43
NHL FaceOff 2003	Sony CEA	●●	64
NHL Hitz 20-02	Midway	●●●●	51
NHL Hitz 20-03	Midway	●●●●◐	62
⚡NHL Hitz Pro	Midway	●●●●	73
Ninja Assault	Namco	●●◐	61
No One Lives Forever	Sierra	●●●◐	56
Okage: Shadow King	Sony CEA	●●●	51
Oni	Rockstar	●◐	43
Onimusha: Warlords	Capcom	●●●●	43
Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny	Capcom	●●●●	60
Onimusha 3: Demon Siege	Capcom	●●●●◐	81
Orphen: Scion of Sorcery	Activision	●●●	39
Pac-Man Fever	Namco	●●	60
Pac-Man World 2	Namco	●●●●◐	54
PaRappa the Rapper 2	Sony CEA	●●●◐	53
Paris-Dakar Rally	Acclaim	●●	53
Pirates: The Legend of Black Kat	EA Games	●●●◐	55
Pitfall: The Lost Expedition	Activision	●●	80
Pool Paradise	Ignition	●●●◐	83
Portal Runner	3DO	●●	50
The Powerpuff Girls: Relish Rampage	Bam	●●	65
Pride FC	THQ	●●●●	65
Primal	Sony CEA	●●●●	68
Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time	Ubisoft	●●●●●	75
Pro Race Driver	Codemasters	●●●●◐	65
Project Eden	Eidos	●●●◐	52

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Pryzm Chapter One: The Dark Unicorn	TDK Mediactive	●●◖	60
Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy	Midway	●●●●◖	82
P.T.O. IV	Koei	●●●	66
Q-Ball Billiards Master	Take-Two	●●●◖	40
Quake III Revolution	EA Games	●●●●◖	44
R: Racing Evolution	Namco	●●●●	76
R-Type Final	Eidos/Fresh Games	●●●●	78
Rally Fusion: Race of Champions	Activision	●●●	64
Ratchet & Clank	Sony CEA	●●●●●	63
Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando	Sony CEA	●●●●●	75
Rayman 2: Revolution	Ubisoft	●●●●●	41
Rayman 3: Hoodlum Havoc	Ubisoft	●●●◖	67
Rayman Arena	Ubisoft	●●●◖	57
RC Revenge Pro	Acclaim	●●◖	41
Ready 2 Rumble Boxing Round 2	Midway	●●●●	40
Real Pool	Infogrames	●●●◖	40
Red Card Soccer 20-03	Midway	●●●	57
Red Dead Revolver	Rockstar	●●●●	82

LEVEL REWARDS

Here's what fancy shootin'll git yer. The first column of rewards is for a Good rating, and the second column is for an Excellent rating.

[C] = Character, **[L]** = Level, **[U]** = Upgrade, **[W]** = Weapon

LEVEL	GOOD REWARD	EXCELLENT REWARD
Bull's Eye	**[U]** old pistol	**[L]** Broken Creek
Bounty Hunter	**[C]** "Bloody" Tom	**[C]** "Big Oaf" Whitney
Ugly Streetfight	**[C]** "Ugly" Chris	**[L]** Freak Show
Railroaded	**[U]** owl rifle	**[C]** Rico Pedrosa
Carnival Life	Dead-Eye max-up	**[C]** "Pig" Josh
Freak Show	Health max-up	**[U]** breech loader
Rogue Valley	**[C]** Cooper	**[C]** Bad Bessie
Cemetery	**[L]** Ghost Town	**[C]** Mr. Black
Range War	**[L]** The Ranch	**[C]** Holstein Hal
Saloon Fight	**[C]** Dan	**[C]** Sam
The Traitor	**[L]** The Bridge	Health max-up
Sunset Canyon	**[U]** twin revolvers	Dead-Eye max-up
Bear Mountain	**[C]** Shadow Wolf	Dead-Eye max-up
The Mine	**[L]** The Mine	**[C]** "Smiley" Fawler
Hell Pass	**[C]** Buffalo	**[C]** Gabriel Navarro
Fort Diego	Health max-up	**[C]** Colonel Daren
Devils & Angels	**[L]** The Ranch	**[C]** General Diego
Battle Finale	Dead-Eye max-up	**[C]** Mr. Kelley
The Siege	**[L]** Mansion Grounds	**[C]** Jason Cornet
Fall From Grace	**[W]** scorpion revolver	**[C]** Governor Griffon

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Red Faction	THQ	●●●●●	46
Red Faction II	THQ	●●●●	63
Reel Fishing III	Natsume	●●●●	72
Reign of Fire	Bam	●●●◖	63
Resident Evil Code: Veronica X	Capcom	●●●●◖	48
Resident Evil: Dead Aim	Capcom	●●●◖	70
Resident Evil Outbreak	Capcom	●●●◖	81
Return to Castle Wolfenstein: OR	Activision	●●●◖	71
Rez	Sega	●●●●◖	53
Ribbit King	Bandai	●●●	82
Ridge Racer V	Namco	●●●●◖	38
Riding Spirits	Bam	●●●◖	61
Ring of Red	Konami	●●●●	43
Rise to Honor	Sony CEA	●●●	78
⚡Risk: Global Domination	Atari	●●●●	73
RLH: Run Like Hell	Interplay	●●●	62
Road Kill	Midway	●●●●	74
Road Trip	Conspiracy	●●●●	61
Robin Hood: Defender of the Crown	Capcom	●●◖	74
Rocky	Ubisoft	●●●●	64
Robot Alchemic Drive	Enix	●●●●	63
Robotech: Battlecry	TDK	●●●◖	62
Rogue Ops	Kemco	●●◖	75
Romance of the Three Kingdoms VII	Koei	●●◖	60
Romance of the Three Kingdoms VIII	Koei	●●●	73
RPG Maker 2	Agetec	●●●◖	74
RTX Red Rock	LucasArts	●●	71
Rugby	EA Sports	●●●◖	48
Rugby 2004	EA Sports	●●●	73
Rumble Racing	EA Games	●●●●◖	45
Rune: Viking Warlord	Take-Two	●●◖	48
Rygar: The Legendary Adventure	Tecmo	●●●●◖	64
Salt Lake 2002	Eidos	●●◖	55
Samurai Jack: The Shadow of Aku	Sega	●●●●	80

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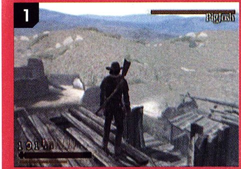

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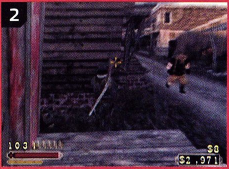

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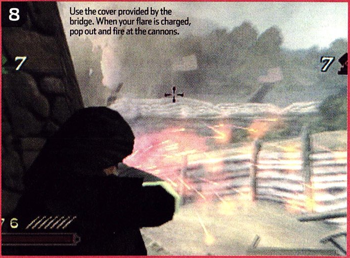

Use the cover provided by the bridge. When your flare is charged, pop out and fire at the cannons.

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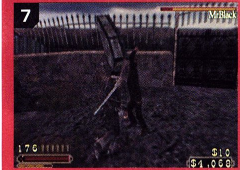

RED DEAD REVOLVER

EIGHT TOUGHEST SPOTS IN THE GAME

CHAPTER 6: CARNIVAL LIFE

DEFEATING "PIG" JOSH

Suggested Weaponry: twin revolvers (if purchased) or revolver, owl rifle, knife

1 "Pig" Josh emerges from his circus trailer once the second wave of circus freaks has fallen. Follow Jack upstairs, and jump onto the roof. On the highest peak, unload into Josh's porky flesh with your owl rifle. If he blows himself up in the building, pop shots at him through the various gaps in the roof. Although this method will take a little longer, it keeps you out of his blast radius.

You can confuse the circus slob by moving around the rooftop between explosions. This may send him "looking" for you—shoot him in the back from your perch, stunning him, and pop off cheap shots. Stay on the highest point of the rooftop and repeat the process.

2 The first wave of thugs can be taken down from the starting point, using the ends of the buildings for cover. After the first wave, move slowly, but don't get ahead of yourself and draw the attention of more murderous Westerners than you can handle. Use your rifle for long-range shots and your revolver for closer situations.

3 Some buildings let you escape gunfire by entering through their open doorways. As you near the middle of the strip, watch for gunslingers on balconies. Overrun? Retreat back to the end of the street where you began and reapproach the gauntlet.

4 At the end of the street, Red encounters a 3-on-1 dueling showdown. Starting with the fatty on the right, quickly set targets across the chests of the three men. Jesse is the most difficult, but he will fall with shots to the head.

CHAPTER 9: GHOST TOWN

COMPLETING THE LEVEL

Suggested Weaponry: revolver or twin revolvers, repeater rifle or Halcon rifle

CHAPTER 10: CEMETERY

DEFEATING MR. BLACK

Suggested Weaponry: twin revolvers, owl rifle, dynamite

5 Mr. Black is accompanied by four bandits who

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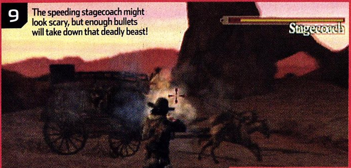
The speeding stagecoach might look scary, but enough bullets will take down that deadly beast!

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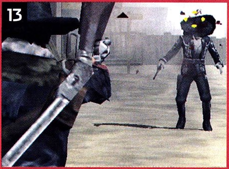

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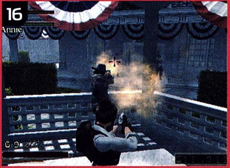

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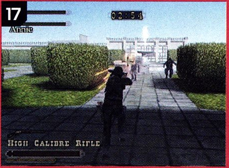


are your first priority. Keep them between you and Mr. Black as you strafe, shooting the thugs one by one. If you keep them between you, Mr. Black will help your efforts by firing on his own men. One of the four drops the only health found in this stage. When all four have fallen, concentrate on Mr. Black.

6 The cemetery provides little protection, so keep on the move. Use headstones for temporary cover, then use the tree, your best source of protection throughout the encounter.

Mr. Black attacks with a casket swipe if you get too close and a minigun from any distance. The latter does some pretty serious damage, so run as soon as you suspect it. Escape by running when the firing starts and hope you stay one step ahead of it. Take cover behind the tree. Toss a stick of dynamite at Mr. Black's feet when he sets up for an attack to disrupt it.

7 Mr. Black is most vulnerable after the minigun attack. Get into midrange with your revolver and shoot at him as he attempts to pack the gun away, then pelt him in the head continuously. Continue this while avoiding his minigun as best you can.

CHAPTER 13: THE TRAITOR

TAKING OUT THE EIGHT U.S. CANNONS

Suggested Weaponry: Martillo del Dios

8 As soon as you take out the first wave of enemy soldiers, attack the cannons. Once on the bridge, jump to the water and run under the bridge. Use the stone support wall for cover.

Equip your Martillo del Dios and charge up a flare. Fire at the enemy cannons with the flags behind them. After your flare hits, the cannons will fire. Seek cover, charge up your flare again, then pop out and fire at the next enemy cannon. Repeat this on both sides of the bridge.

Another wave of enemy soldiers storms in. Shoot them as they get close, but continue to fire flares at the cannons. The more cannons you destroy, the fewer you have to worry about later.

CHAPTER 14: SUNSET CANYON

DESTROYING THE STAGECOACH

Suggested Weaponry: repeater rifle, revolver

9 Most of your shots will be from a distance with the repeater rifle. When you ascend the dirt mound, run to the left of the stone road that crosses the canyon to trigger the stagecoach. Quickly shoot as it drives by. Avoid fire from the driver and passenger. Keep firing until the coach disappears around the building behind you. Continue your barrage of bullets when it reappears on the other side. Don't leave that top area, because the coach returns there.

As you keep up the attack, shoot any enemies running around. If the stagecoach tries to run over you, roll to safety. Because of its powerful gun, you shouldn't stay behind the coach. There's health nearby if you need it.

Stay on the top level and fire on the coach even if it heads down to the lower road. Repeat until it explodes.

CHAPTER 20: FORT DIEGO

COMPLETING THE LEVEL

Suggested Weaponry: bayonet rifle, Pacificador

Choose weapons that are powerful, quick, and have multiple shots. Range isn't too important because most of the fighting will be up close.

10 Turn to the left and shoot the sniper in the balcony window. As you do so, try to stay as close to the stone wall as possible. After he's dead, run under the balcony, climb the boxes, and collect the health. Avoid shooting anybody else, just get into the building.

Drop through the hole in the floor and walk to the right side of the doorway. Three enemies are hiding behind cover in the next room. Ease out and shoot the first one to the left; take out the one in the center, then kill the last one to the right and collect their items.

Follow the hallway until you can see outside. Keep to the safety of the hallway and shoot outside enemies. Progress slowly along the ruins, dropping fools who pop out to kill you. Eventually, you'll reach a hole in the wall. Jump to the lower level. Collect all the items in the area—you won't be coming back. Don't worry, most of the big guys drop at least a small health bottle.

11 Stay close to the doorways and aim down the hallways for any enemies. As you drop them, make your way down the hall, following it left. When the hallway looks blocked, shoot the TNT barrels.

At the end is a room with stairs leading up. Shoot the big guy charging in from the left. Then shoot the enemy at the top of the stairs. Climb partway up the stairs and take out the bandito manning the chain gun on the roof. Don't try to head up there yourself; you'll only get slaughtered. Instead, run out the door near the bottom of the stairs, take cover behind the wall in front of you, and then take out the enemies scattered about the area.

12 Keep killing those gunfighters until Colonel Daren shows up. Run around the cover as you fire; always hide while you reload. When Daren points his cannon arm at you, hide! Keep up this shoot-and-hide technique.

CHAPTER 24: BATTLE ROYALE FINALE

DUELING AND DEFEATING MR. KELLEY

Suggested Weaponry: high-caliber rifle, widowmaker

13 Kelley is extremely fast on the draw. As soon as the duel starts, get your reticule on him. Aim at his legs first to temporarily stun him. Move the reticule up his body and continue shooting him to prevent him from firing at you. After a few well-placed shots, Kelley goes down.

14 Kelley is up and ready to do more damage. Use a rifle and dead-eye ability when you can as you chase him. Be careful with your shots—don't kill any townsfolk. As you chase Kelley, use the buildings for cover and fire head shots at him.

CHAPTER 25: SIEGE

COMPLETING THE LEVEL

Suggested Weaponry: high-caliber rifle, widowmaker

As you start, run for the front hedges, shooting the enemies who scatter. From the hedge, shoot enemies who might harm you or your friends. When it's clear, concentrate on Oswald, who is located on the balcony. Duck in and out of cover as you shoot him.

15 After Oswald falls, run to the fountain opposite your friends. Shoot the random soldiers running around, but ignore Randy. He stays on the opposite side of the fountain. As you take out the rest of the soldiers, your friends shoot Randy for you. After you're done with the goons, finish Randy off by strafing and firing to the left and right of the fountain.

16 Collect Randy's health and follow your friends to the side of the yard. More enemies emerge. Use your rifle to protect your friends. Annie tries to get into the house and enemies appear. Kill them all!

The door is locked, so run upstairs. More enemies come out of the door on the second floor. After they die, more appear on the roof. Shoot them to trigger a cut-scene.

17 Annie provides cover from the upstairs balcony, so follow Jack downstairs and give him cover. Jack needs three minutes to pick the lock. Unfortunately, more enemies show up. Use your rifle to drop them, saving your Zwei Fasser for the bosses. Use dead-eye to make your shots on the bosses count. Stay close to the hedges, but don't go too far from Jack. Anyone firing at Jack is a priority target. Near the end, Annie comes down to join the battle, leaving you with two bodies to defend. «

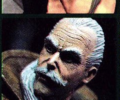
LOOK SHARP

Wondering why some levels of *Red Dead Revolver* look so different from others? We did too, so we asked Rockstar about it. Its response: "We wanted there to be a clear progression in the look and feel of the levels. Red moves on from the dusty ghost town landscapes seen early in the game into more open landscapes. We designed the game so that in some levels the picture is sharper in the middle and blurrier on the edges of the screen to help convey the essence of the period setting."

OVERRATED/ UNDERRATED

THE GENERAL PUBLIC DOESN'T KNOW JACK, OR WE HAVE TASTE SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO

Let's face it: The masses often don't have very good taste. Which is why some mediocre things become very popular, while other much better things are overlooked—case in point, *American Idol* versus *Arrested Development*. Here's our list of the overrated and underrated of PlayStation.



VILLAIN

OVER SEPHIROTH (FINAL FANTASY VII)

So because this guy looks kinda neat (the fangirls love him for looking like a member of the Girlymen Club) and he walks through fire in a cut-scene, he's automatically revered as the greatest *Final Fantasy* villain ever? If he's such an awesome villain, why does he spend half the game on the run and the other half sitting around a crater, with his only acts of note being the aforementioned firewalk and the slaughter of Aeris? Whatever.

UNDER REVOLVER OCELOT (METAL GEAR SOLID FRANCHISE)

Not only does he pull off badass trick shots with revolvers, but he also gets an arm chopped off and still manages to torture Solid Snake with full gusto. While other people with the "Snake" name have weird family connections and delusions of grandeur, Ocelot is just a persistent, sneaky, and cool villain. Heck, just watch the *MGS3* trailer and you'll see that he was a badass even in the '60s.

Ashley Wood for Idea + Design Works, LLC

IMPORT

OVER TOKIMEKI MEMORIAL
You say this "dating sim" is a revolutionary game of human interaction. We say it's a creepy step toward tentacle porn. Here's a suggestion: How about you work on your relationships in real life, hmm?

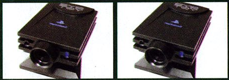
UNDER GUITAR FREAKS
Think *DDR*, but with catchier songs and a kick-ass guitar-shaped controller. We have no idea why Konami hasn't brought this over to the good ol' U.S. of A. yet, but we sure wish it would.

SIDEKICK

OVER DAXTER (JAK AND DAXTER)
Vinnie Delpino—sorry, Max Casella should be given props for making what could have been a really annoying character tolerable. But what's Daxter good for? He's a little weasel with a very big mouth—and not much more.

UNDER SCREE (PRIMAL)
This is the way to build a memorable sidekick: Make him dignified, make him funny looking, and make him *useful*. It might even be argued that Scree is too good for the game he is in.

PS2 PERIPHERAL



OVER EYETOY
Those who purchased an EyeToy quickly discovered that its key offerings are some wonky face mapping and a bunch of minigames. It's hardly the must-have we were told it would be.

UNDER EYETOY
EyeToy technology offers the PS2 a big way to take a giant leap ahead of the rest of the console pack—once developers start stretching the limits of this device. We're looking forward to the day someone capitalizes on EyeToy's capabilities.

CANCELED GAME

OVER THRILL KILL
Back in '98, this ultrabloody fighter by Paradox Development was canceled when family-friendly EA absorbed Virgin Interactive. It got lots of hype. But it really sucked, too.

UNDER GUNSLINGER
Save townsfolk, you're liked; kill their horses, you're an outlaw. Scheduled for 2001, Surreal Software's Old West PS2 game offered true freedom, including good and bad paths. Ahead of its time? Quite possibly.

5-BLARG GAME

OVER JAK AND DAXTER: THE PRECURSOR LEGACY
An astonishing example of how technological prowess makes it easy to overlook a game's basic flaws: too easy, too kiddie, too damn much collecting—and not enough story.

UNDER ESCAPE FROM MONKEY ISLAND
In a world where "adventure game" has come to mean "*Resident Evil*-style game," it is no surprise that this sharp, clever throwback didn't make a peep on the charts. But you should all still be ashamed of yourselves.

LARA CROFT MODEL

OVER NELL MCANDREW
Yeah, this *Playboy* centerfold is hot, but Nell McAndrew's career seems to be based solely on the fact that she is Nell McAndrew, as is evidenced by her leaps between grade-Z reality programs.

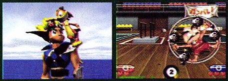
UNDER RHONA MITRA
Ms. Mitra has parlayed her stint as Lara Croft into a number of television and film roles—you may have caught her on the shows *Party of Five* and *The Practice* or in the films *Stuck on You* and *Sweet Home Alabama*. Break a leg, Rhona!

USELESS KART-RACING GAME

OVER STAR WARS: SUPER BOMBAD RACING
Star Wars characters with big heads. Puh-lease. It is an interesting game, and it got a ton of hype pre-*Episode I*, but it really didn't deserve any of it. Who decided that big-head modes were funny? Not us.

UNDER ANTZ EXTREME RACING
An unusual game in the licensed-kart subgenre, as it is guilty of actually not sucking too much. We never thought we'd say this in relation to a videogame, but hooray for Woody Allen.

DYNAMIC DUO



OVER JAK AND DAXTER
When it comes to action, Jak and Daxter are a great team, but the second they start talking (particularly Daxter), it all goes downhill. That stupid rat won't shut up

UNDER DR. DAN AND DR. DON (POINT BLANK, PS1)
What do you get when you cross Bert from *Sesame Street* with any depiction of a Canadian in *South Park*? Two of the most underappreciated badass mofos in gaming—that's what.

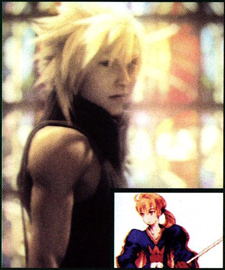
‹ DANGEROUS CURVES

In case you didn't believe us that Rhona is the best Lara Croft model ever, we present further evidence: Out of all nine models, Rhona is the only one whose measurements of 34-24-35 exactly match digital Lara's.

NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH

Suiko-den, a 1942 Japanese film starring prolific actress Hideko Takamine.

FINAL FANTASY HERO



OVER CLOUD STRIFE (FINAL FANTASY VII)
Why do people fawn over this spiky-haired guy with intense memory problems whose dialogue is 47 percent "…" and 53 percent whining? Why do people forgive the fact that he lies about his past and embellishes his life story by taking credit for things his dead friend did? It's because of the big sword, right?

UNDER RAMZA BEOULVE (FINAL FANTASY TACTICS)
Ramza is a true hero in that he's actually trusting and noble, and he selflessly saves the entire world, even though it means being branded a heretic and being completely hidden from memory while someone else takes credit for his deeds. Kind of like an anti-Cloud. Plus, he is just plain more fun to play as in terms of actual gameplay.

EXTRAS AND BONUSES

OVER TIMESPLITTERS' MAP MAKER
It sounded powerful and revolutionary…but it is just a bit too simple to offer more than a momentary diversion. Hopefully, the planned online capabilities of *TS3* will make this option more interesting.

UNDER HALF-LIFE'S ADD-ON DISC
Hello? Game developers? Adding value is good. When Sierra included a bonus level for *Half-Life* on our demo disc, we figured designers would finally take the hint. They didn't.

RPG FRANCHISE

OVER FINAL FANTASY
C'mon! What do you mean you think we're nuts? Unconditional love is all well and good, but for a relationship to work, each side needs to understand the other's problems. *Final Fantasy* is flawed. Deal with it.

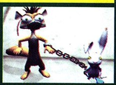
‹ UNDER SUIKODEN
Speaking of flaws, yes the last *Suikoden* certainly has problems. That said, this is one of the most dependable RPG franchises on PlayStation, and so few people have played it. Shame on you.

OUTBREAK

OVER RESIDENT EVIL: OUTBREAK
Yet another game about a zombie outbreak in the urban populace. Except this survival-horror game includes other Internet yahoos who can become zombies too and try to eat you. No thanks.

UNDER .HACK//OUTBREAK
Here's a cool idea: an MMORPG without nerds named "BizzWizz The Calcitrant" clogging up your fun. The *.hack* series proves that serialized games can work, and it is a refreshing change of pace from other games involving viral outbreaks.

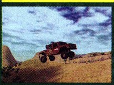
SPIN-OFF GAME CHARACTER



OVER NINA (DEATH BY DEGREES/TEKKEN)
OK, so she's hot. What else does she have? An English accent. Yeah, well, we've got one of those around here, too, and they're not all they're cracked up to be, believe us.

UNDER SPANX (WHIPLASH/MAD DASH RACING)
Easy to dismiss as just a stupid character from a couple of stupid games by Eidos, but dig deeper and you'll find that Spanx is in the unusual position of actually being funny. Kinda rare for a game character.

RACING FRANCHISE



OVER TEST DRIVE
It's been around since the dawn of time, but this franchise hasn't really brought anything new to the table in about 10 years. Does anyone really care anymore?

UNDER WRC
All rally games are underappreciated, so it's no surprise that one of the most visceral racing games of recent years was overlooked. The franchise is up to its fourth game in the United Kingdom. No such luck here.

HOT CHICK

OVER LARA CROFT (TOMB RAIDER)
The most recognizable female game character after Ms. Pac-Man, Lara Croft is so overexposed that your grandmother probably knows who she is. However, best known does not always equal best looking. Like here, for example.

UNDER JENNIFER TATE (PRIMAL)
The chick from *Primal* has got it goin' on, and not enough people know it. She's smart. She's funny. She hangs out in biker bars. She's good in a fight. And she's got a really nice butt.

CRAPPY BATMAN GAME

OVER BATMAN & ROBIN
This stinker certainly did nothing to prove wrong the assumption that superhero and movie games must suck—it is both. Still, it's often referred to as the worst PlayStation Batman game. It's not.

UNDER BATMAN BEYOND: RETURN OF THE JOKER
If more people don't start getting it into their heads that the only *Batman Beyond* game is also the suckiest PlayStation Batman game of all time—period—then the Joker has already won.

STAR WARS REFERENCE

BLUE HARVEST

OVER BIGGS AND WEDGE (FINAL FANTASY SERIES)
The fact that *FF* often features characters named after Luke's Rebel buddies is certainly cool, but people seem to think it's the only *Star Wars* reference in games or something.

UNDER BLUE HARVEST (COVERT OPS: NUCLEAR DAWN)
Geeky *Star Wars* fact No. 1,138: To keep rabid fans from the set, George Lucas and co. disguised the filming of on-location sequences in *Return of the Jedi* as a horror film called *Blue Harvest*.

DEATH SCENE

OVER AERIS (FINAL FANTASY VII)
Did anyone not see this coming? Well, other than the legions of fanboys writing insipid poetry about her untimely death. She's been ended: Get over it.

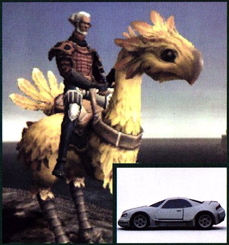
UNDER NUMEROUS NAMELESS SOLDIERS (DYNASTY WARRIORS FRANCHISE)
Why do people cry over the death of one flower girl but not the reckless slaying of hundreds of soldiers? These guys had lives, but not one of you cared! We must have missed the memo that said "Homicide is sad, but massacres are A-OK!"

OVERUSED SONG IN A GAME

OVER "DRAGULA" BY ROB ZOMBIE
"Dragula" is in lots of games—from *Nightmare Creatures II* to *Sled Storm*—and it became the poster song for overused licensed music. It still overshadows other songs we hear too much.

UNDER "FAT LIP" BY SUM 41
As much as people complain about "Dragula," you never really hear any gripes about "Fat Lip"—which is in *NHL 2002, ESPN X Games: Skateboarding,* and *Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2,* to name a few.

TRANSPORTATION

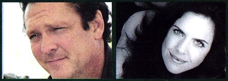


OVER CARS
UNDER CHOCOBOS

RELEASE DATE

OVER HOLIDAYS
UNDER JUNE

VOICES



OVER CELEBRITIES
UNDER PROFESSIONAL VOICE ACTORS

BAD NUMERAL USAGE IN A TITLE

OVER DRIV3R
UNDER FINAL FANTASY X-2

SILLY PERIOD/DOUBLE-SLASH USE

OVER .HACK//WHATEVER
UNDER LARGO WINCH.//COMMANDO SAR

WEAPON

OVER GUNS
UNDER GUITARS

LESBIANS

OVER HANA AND RAIN (FEAR EFFECT 2)
For all the advertising promising girl-on-girl fun, *Fear Effect 2* ended up being disappointingly staid. Hana and Rain's longing glances and slinky dresses do not hot lesbian action make.

UNDER GIRLS OF THE SIMS
Under the innocent trappings of this family-friendly game lies a quivering heart of Sapphic lust. The women of *The Sims: Bustin' Out* take any excuse to make out. Your neighbor's not ogling you—she wants your girlfriend.

DEVELOPER

OVER NAUGHTY DOG
Are they talented, or simply talented at shameless self-promotion? It's probably a little of both—the pendulum can swing either way. It went one way for *Crash: WARPED*, and perhaps by *Jak II* it had swung all the way in the opposite direction.

UNDER UBISOFT MONTREAL
These guys know their stuff, not least of which is what it takes to make our Game of the Year in 2003, *Prince of Persia*.

3D TURN-BASED ANIMAL WARFARE

OVER WORMS 3D
As far as PlayStation franchises go, *Worms* is actually *under*rated—which is why you should put this down and go play any 2D *Worms* game now. But if you want your animal warfare in 3D, there is a better option.

UNDER HOGS OF WAR
We're pretty sure Infogrames just said, "Let's do *Worms* in 3D but with pigs," but man, did it work well. The graphics look even worse than in 2000. Still, fine tactical strategy awaits.

HERDING GAME

OVER HERDY GERDY
This isn't so much a herding game as is it a glorified cel-shaded extension of that scene in *Rocky* where Sly chases chickens all over the place—with some pan flutery thrown into the mix.

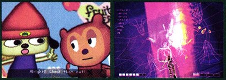
UNDER SHEEP
How can you not love a game that lets you move sheep around with characters that we affectionately described as "a mother flocker" and "a flocking bitch"? All *Sheep* needed was a litter of level one cats to be the perfect herding game.

PS1 FRANCHISE RUINED ON PS2

OVER TOMB RAIDER
Yeah, yeah. Lara is overexposed, and now she's raided herself into mediocrity. Somebody light up the Bat Signal and tell Batman that there's a new detective in town. When even nursing homes are aware that Lara is played out, saying she's played out is, well, officially played out.

UNDER SAGA
The first two *SaGa Frontier* games on PS1 were quirky but not bothersome. But then, some sort of virus that causes hyperincompetency infected Akitoshi Kawazu while he was doing *Unlimited SaGa*. It's not entirely hard to botch up combat systems and graphics, but when even the act of moving around is a painful chore, you've got yourself a ruined franchise.

MUSIC GAME



OVER PARAPPA THE RAPPER
If you're down with this hip-hop hound, our selection will no doubt shock you. But let's face it—the game is Simon Says with weird music and characters, and it's arguably more fun to watch than it is to play.

UNDER REZ
Now this is something we want to see more of: A game that's equally compelling to shooter fans and music fans, where every shot fired only adds to the heavenly ambient soundtrack.

BAD GAMES BASED ON CARTOONS

OVER THE SIMPSONS
Though Bart and co. have starred in some real stinkers (*Wrestling* and *Skateboarding*, especially), the awesome *Hit & Run* and adequate *Road Rage* should satisfy any real fan.

UNDER SOUTH PARK
Who killed Kenny? Oh, that's right—Acclaim did. Unlike *The Simpsons*, all three of *South Park*'s PlayStation games have absolutely, inarguably sucked. Yet *South Park* fans don't seem nearly as outraged as the *Simpsons* fans do.

YOUR TURN

Maybe we overlooked a category, or maybe you think our choices are just plain wrong. Whatever the case, it's your turn: Send an e-mail with the subject line "Over/Under" to opm@ziffdavis.com—we'll print the best responses in an upcoming issue.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Samurai Warriors	Koei/EA	●●●●	81

Katana-wielding warriors from the feudal past have been in vogue since SNK's seminal *Samurai Shodown* series on the Neo-Geo. But did you know how many additional weapon masters the game contains?

COMPLETE...	...TO UNLOCK
Kenshin story	Keiji Maeda
Noh, Oichi, Magoichi stories	Nobunaga Oda
Okuni story	Goemon Ishikawa
Keiji story	Okuni
Shingen, Hanzo stories	Kunoichi
Any story	Magoichi Saika
Yukimura story	Shingen Takeda
Any two stories	Masamune Date
Ranmaru story	Noh
Mitsuhide story	Ranmaru Mari

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Saturday Night Speedway	Atari	●●◖	81
Savage Skies	Bam	●●●	56
Scooby-Doo! Mystery Mayhem	THQ	●●●	81
Scooby-Doo! Night of 100 Frights	THQ	●●●	58
The Scorpion King: Rise of the Akkadian	Universal	●●	62
Secret Weapons Over Normandy	LucasArts	●●●●	75
Seek and Destroy	Conspiracy	●●●◖	66
Sega Bass Fishing Duel	Sega	●●●	62
Sega Soccer Slam	Sega Sports	●●	62
Sega Sports Tennis	Sega Sports	●●●●◖	60
⚡Serious Sam: Next Encounter	Global Star	●●●◖	81
Seven Samurai 20XX	Sammy	●●	80
Shadow Hearts	Midway	●●●●	52
Shadow of Destiny	Konami	●●●◖	43
Shadow Man: 2econd Coming	Acclaim	●●	57
Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder	Activision	●●◖	52
Shifters	3DO	●	58
Shinobi	Sega	●●●◖	63
Showdown: Legends of Wrestling	Acclaim	●◖	83
Shox	EA Sports Big	●●●◖	63
Shrek 2	Activision	●●●◖	82

While we can't solve the smell or that back-talking donkey, here're a couple of codes to tap in at the Scrapbook screen. Once done, exit the level.

Bonus games	←, ↑, ⊗, ○, ←, ↑, ⊗, ○, ←, ↑, ⊗, ○, □, ○, □, ○, □, ○
Level select	←, ↑, ⊗, ○, ←, ↑, ⊗, ○, ←, ↑, ⊗, ○, ↑, ↑, ↑, ↑, ↑

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Shrek Super Party	TDK Mediactive	●●◖	64
Siren	Sony CEA	●●●	81
Silent Hill 2	Konami	●●●●◖	50
Silent Hill 3	Konami	●●●●◖	71
Silent Line: Armored Core	Agetec	●●●◖	70
Silent Scope	Konami	●●●	39
Silent Scope 2	Konami	●●●◖	49
Silent Scope 3	Konami	●●●◖	62
Silpheed: The Lost Planet	Working Designs	●●●◖	40
The Simpsons: Hit & Run	Vivendi Universal	●●●●	72
The Simpsons: Road Rage	EA Games	●●●	52
The Simpsons Skateboarding	EA Games	●◖	64
The Sims	EA Games	●●●●	65
⚡The Sims: Bustin' Out	EA Games	●●●●◖	76
Sky Gunner	Atlus	●●●◖	58
Sky Odyssey	Activision	●●●	40
Sled Storm	EA Sports Big	●●●◖	55
Sly Cooper and the Thievius Raccoonus	Sony CEA	●●●●●	62
Smash Cars	Metro3D	●●●◖	71
Smash Court Tennis: Pro Tournament	Namco	●●●◖	56
Smash Court Tennis: Pro Tournament 2	Namco	●●●●	82
Smuggler's Run	Rockstar	●●●●◖	39
Smuggler's Run 2: Hostile Territory	Rockstar	●●●●◖	52
Soccer America: International Cup	Hot-B	●●	48
Soccer Mania	EA/Lego	●●●◖	59
⚡SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs	Sony CEA	●●●●●	60
⚡SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs	Sony CEA	●●●●●	75
Soldier of Fortune	Majesco	●●●	52
Sonic Heroes	Sega	●●	77
Soul Calibur II	Namco	●●●●●	72
Soul Reaver 2	Eidos	●●●	52
Space Channel 5 Special Edition	Sega	●●●◖	75
Space Race	Infogrames	●●◖	59
Spawn Armageddon	Namco	●◖	76
Speed Kings	Acclaim	●●●●	70
Sphinx and the Cursed Mummy	THQ	●●●◖	75

ESSENTIAL SPORTS

GREAT MOMENTS IN THE HISTORY OF SPORTS GAMES

NFL GAMEDAY 989 SPORTS, 1996

Though it has deteriorated over the years, the *NFL GameDay* franchise used to be the top dog. The very first game in the series was the first polygonal football game to hit PlayStation, and it also offered the most in-depth experience, which helped it hurdle over *Madden* as the football game to have. But it wouldn't be too long before competitors caught up. **Not reviewed in *OPM*.**

NFL BLITZ MIDWAY, 1998

Not everyone likes to play the same old type of football. *NFL Blitz* served as a great alternative to football sims like *Madden* and *GameDay*, but it also spawned Sony's horrible *NFL Xtreme* knockoff and probably convinced Midway to apply the formula to baseball, which it did in *MLB SlugFest*, and many other sports games. ●●●●●

MADDEN NFL 2001 EA SPORTS, 2000

If you were one of the lucky half million who could actually get a PS2 on its launch day, there's a strong chance that *Madden 2001* was in your shopping cart. And for good reason. No other game at the time showed off the system's power so well, and it set the benchmark for not only how good football games could look, but also sports games in general. ●●●●●

SEGA SPORTS TENNIS SEGA, 2002

To many, tennis games are nothing more than glorified versions of *Pong*, but Sega's follow-up to *Virtua Tennis* showed that they can be much more. The key to *Sega Sports Tennis*' success was its façade of simplicity that initially lured people in. But underneath was a hidden layer of depth, and an inherent sense of sheer fun kept people glued to the game. ●●●●◖

MVP BASEBALL 2003 EA SPORTS, 2002

Good riddance, *Triple Play*. EA retired its mediocre baseball series in favor of an entire face-lift known as *MVP Baseball 2003*. All of a sudden, EA baseball actually approached realism (scores were 6-4, not 16-14), and the pitching meter is something every other game should pick up. (Though, to be fair, the first pitching meter was actually found in Virgin Interactive's *Grand Slam* on PS1.) ●●●◖○

NBA LIVE 2003 EA SPORTS, 2002

NBA Live 2003 marked the first time in a long while that an EA Sports basketball game was actually good. But more important, it was also the first game to use the awesome Freestyle mechanics that let onscreen ball handlers mimic right analog stick movement, allowing for an unprecedented amount of control. Unfortunately, it was still a little too fast-paced for basketball simulation fans. ●●●●○

WORLD SOCCER: WINNING ELEVEN 6 INTERNATIONAL KONAMI, 2003

Though the *Winning Eleven* series had been a worldwide hit everywhere else years before, this was America's first look at the franchise, and only the production values of *FIFA* made thinking of playing any other soccer game an option. A top-notch sports sim, it even improved your players depending on how they played. ●●●●●

ESPN NBA BASKETBALL SEGA SPORTS, 2003

The last version of Sega's basketball game obviously deserves credit for being the best basketball simulation available on PS2, but it was the 24/7 mode that really set it apart. Not unlike a basketball RPG, you could improve a player's skills, travel the country, and challenge NBA superstars to gain respect. It also presented a nice break from the typical 5-on-5 action. ●●●●●

NBA BALLERS MIDWAY, 2004

Midway's streetball game proved two things: NBA players make too much money and 1-on-1 basketball works. Its fighting-game gameplay mechanics introduced a new layer of depth to both regular and street basketball, challenging players to mix traditional *NBA Jam* basketball with the crazy street-style moves that can be executed only through a series of button combinations. ●●●●○

TRY TO FORGET

MADDEN NFL '96
EA Sports, unreleased

So, what sucked about *Madden NFL '96*? The simple fact that it never came out. Ironically, the game was far into development at Visual Concepts (which now develops Sega's sports games), but EA Sports higher-ups thought VC's take on the franchise wasn't looking too hot, so the company scrapped it.

NFL GAMEDAY 2001
Sony CEA, 2000

How was it possible that 989 Sports' football game looked far worse than anything the competition was offering? Who knows, but Sony's first NFL game on PS2 was about as bad as football could get. Horrible graphics combined with A.I. as intelligent as a tree stump very well may have ruined a once-proud franchise.

STREET RACQUETBALL
Agetec, 2003

Yeah, maybe we should cut it some slack for being a $10 game. But honestly, *Street Racquetball* isn't just the worst sports game we've played this millennium, it could also very well be the single worst PlayStation game ever. And it came out last year.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Spider-Man	Activision	●●●●◐	57
Splashdown	Infogrames	●●●●	52
Splashdown: Rides Gone Wild	THQ	●●●●●	72
SpongeBob SquarePants: Battle for Bikini Bottom	THQ	●●●●◐	75
SpyHunter	Midway	●●●●◐	50
SpyHunter 2	Midway	●●●	76
Spyro: Enter the Dragonfly	Vivendi Universal	●●●	64
SSX	EA Sports Big	●●●●●	38
SSX Tricky	EA Sports Big	●●●●●	52
⚡SSX 3	EA Sports Big	●●●●●	74
Star Trek: Shattered Universe	TDK	●●	75
Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force	Majesco	●●◐	53
Star Wars Bounty Hunter	LucasArts	●●●	64
Star Wars: The Clone Wars	LucasArts	●●●	65
Star Wars Super Bombad Racing	LucasArts	●●	45
Star Wars Jedi Starfighter	LucasArts	●●●◐	56
Star Wars Racer Revenge	LucasArts	●●●●◐	55
Star Wars Starfighter	LucasArts	●●●●◐	43
Starsky & Hutch	Gotham Games	●●	74
State of Emergency	Rockstar	●●●	55
Stitch: Experiment 626	Sony CEA	●●◐	59
Street Fighter EX 3	Capcom	●●●◐	39
Street Hoops	Activision	●●●◐	60
Stretch Panic	Conspiracy	●●●◐	47
Strike Force Bowling	Crave	●◐	82
Stuntman	Infogrames/Atari	●●●	59
Sub Rebellion	Metro 3D	●●●●	62
The Suffering	Midway	●●●	80
Suikoden III	Konami	●●●	63
Summer Heat Beach Volleyball	Acclaim	●●●◐	72
Summoner	THQ	●●●	39
Summoner 2	THQ	●●●◐	62
Sunny Garcia Surfing	Ubisoft	●●●◐	51
Super Bust-A-Move	Acclaim	●●●	41
Super Bust-A-Move 2	Ubisoft	●●●◐	63
Super Trucks Racing	XS Games	●◐	76
Supercar Street Challenge	Activision	●●◐	52
Superman: Shadow of Apokolips	Atari	●●●◐	63
Surfing H3O	Rockstar	●●	40
SWAT: Global Strike Team	Sierra	●●●	74
Swing Away Golf	EA Games	●●●	38
⚡Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain	Sony CEA	●●●	81
Tak and the Power of Juju	THQ	●●●◐	75
Tarzan: Untamed	Ubisoft	●●●◐	52
Taz: Wanted	Infogrames	●●●◐	60
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Konami	●●◐	75
Tekken 4	Namco	●●●◐	61
Tekken Tag Tournament	Namco	●●●●◐	39
Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven	Activision	●●●	67
The Terminator: Dawn of Fate	Atari	●●◐	63
Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines	Atari	●◐	77
Test Drive	Infogrames	●●●◐	58
Test Drive Off-Road: Wide Open	Infogrames	●●●	48
Tetris Worlds	THQ	●●	57
Theme Park Roller Coaster	EA Games	●●●●	41
The Thing	Universal	●●●	62
Thunderstrike: Operation Phoenix	Eidos	●◐	52
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001	EA Sports	●●●	44
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2002	EA Sports	●●●●	55
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2003	EA Sports	●●●●◐	63
⚡Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004	EA Sports	●●●●●	73
Time Crisis 2	Namco	●●●●	49
Time Crisis 3	Namco	●●●●◐	74
TimeSplitters	Eidos	●●●●●	39
TimeSplitters 2	Eidos	●●●●●	63
Tokyo Xtreme Racer 3	Crave	●●	76
Tokyo Xtreme Racer Zero	Crave	●●◐	45
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	Ubisoft	●●●◐	65
⚡Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm	Ubisoft	●●●◐	78
⚡Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3	Ubisoft	●●●●	80
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell	Ubisoft	●●●●◐	68
⚡Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow	Ubisoft	●●●●●	82
Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness	Eidos	●●	72
⚡Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Activision	●●●●●	51
⚡Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	Activision	●●●●●	63
⚡Tony Hawk's Underground	Activision	●●●●●	76
Top Angler	Xicat	●●●◐	57
Top Gear Dare Devil	Kemco	●●●◐	41
Top Gun: Combat Zones	Titus	●●●	50
Total Immersion Racing	Empire	●	66
Transformers	Atari	●●●◐	81
Transworld Surf	Infogrames	●●●◐	57
⚡Tribes: Aerial Assault	Sierra	●●●◐	62
Triple Play 2002	EA Sports	●●	55
Triple Play Baseball	EA Sports	●●	45
⚡Trivial Pursuit: Unhinged	Atari	●●	81
True Crime: Streets of L.A.	Activision	●●	76
Tsugunai: Atonement	Atlus	●●●	53
Turok: Evolution	Acclaim	●◐	62
Twisted Metal: Black	Sony CEA	●●●●●	47
⚡Twisted Metal: Black Online	Sony CEA	●●●●	61
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger	EA Games	●●●	62
UEFA Euro 2004	EA Sports	●●●●◐	82
UFC Throwdown	Crave	●●●◐	58
UFC Sudden Impact	Crave	●●●◐	82
Unison	Tecmo	●●●◐	44
Unlimited Saga	Square Enix	●●	70
Unreal Tournament	Infogrames	●●◐	40
V-Rally 3	Infogrames	●●●●◐	64
Vampire Night	Namco	●●◐	52
Van Helsing	Vivendi Universal	●●●◐	82
Vexx	Acclaim	●●	67
Victorious Boxers	Empire	●●●◐	51
Virtua Fighter 4	Sega	●●●●●	55
Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution	Sega	●●●●●	72
Virtual on Marz	Sega	●●	76
Wakeboarding Unleashed	Activision	●●●●◐	70
Wallace & Gromit in Project Zoo	Bam	●●●	74
War Jetz	3DO	●●◐	48
War of the Monsters	Sony CEA	●●●●●	64
⚡Warhammer 40,000: Fire Warrior	THQ	●●◐	74
Warriors of Might & Magic	3DO	●●◐	44
Wave Rally	Eidos	●◐	53
Way of the Samurai	Bam	●●●◐	59
Way of the Samurai 2	Capcom	●●●	82
Wheel of Fortune	Atari	●●◐	76
Whiplash	Eidos	●●●◐	76
Whirl Tour	Vivendi Universal	●●	63
Whiteout	Konami	●	65
Wild Arms 3	Sony CEA	●●●◐	62
Wild Wild Racing	Interplay	●●●	39
Winback	Koei	●●●●	43
Wipeout Fusion	Bam	●●●●◐	57
Wizardry: Tale of the Forsaken Land	Atlus	●●●	53
Woody Woodpecker: Buzz Buzzard Park	DreamCatcher	●●●	57
⚡World Championship Pool 2004	Jaleco	●●●◐	76
World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks	3DO	●●●	42
World of Outlaws: Sprint Cars	Infogrames	●●●●	55
World Series Baseball 2K3	Sega Sports	●●●●	67
World Soccer: Winning Eleven 6 Int'l	Konami	●●●●●	67
World Soccer: Winning Eleven 7 Int'l	Konami	●●●●●	78
World Tour Soccer 2002	Sony CEA	●●●●	53
World Tour Soccer 2003	Sony CEA	●●●●	65
⚡World Tour Soccer 2004	Sony CEA	●●●	80
Wrath Unleashed	LucasArts	●◐	78
WRC: World Rally Championship	Bam	●●●●●	57
Wreckless: The Yakuza Missions	Activision	●●	63
WTA Tour Tennis	Konami	●	57
WWE Crush Hour	THQ	●●◐	68
WWE SmackDown! Here Comes the Pain	THQ	●●●◐	76
WWE SmackDown! Shut Your Mouth	THQ	●●◐	64
WWE SmackDown! Just Bring It	THQ	●●●◐	52
X Squad	EA Games	●●●◐	38
The X-Files: Resist or Serve	Vivendi Universal	●●◐	81
X-Men: Next Dimension	Activision	●●●	64
X2: Wolverine's Revenge	Activision	●●●	69
Xenosaga: Episode 1—Der Wille Zur Macht	Namco	●●●●	66
XGRA: Extreme-G Racing Association	Acclaim	●●●●◐	74
⚡XIII	Ubisoft	●●●◐	75
Yanya Caballista: City Skater	Koei	●●●◐	49
Yu-Gi-Oh! The Duelists of the Roses	Konami	●●◐	67
Zapper	Infogrames	●●◐	64
Z.O.E: Zone of the Enders	Konami	●●●●◐	44
Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner	Konami	●●●●◐	68

READER REVIEWS

ZOMBIES AND CARS DISAPPOINT

NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND

What you said: "This game has been made to cash in on what *The Fast and the Furious* created: stupid kids who know nothing about cars except to put NOS in them and pretty body kits on them. I'm a racing fanatic, and this is one of the worst games I have played.

It's not even close to what real street racing is. The game is fake: Yes, it has arcade-style handling, but the sense of speed is unreal.

Another thing is the drift portion of this game. How the hell can you drift with a Civic without using your E-brake and have complete control over your car? The last problem is the lack of cars and the crappy selection.

The only good things about this game are the graphics, music, and shift points in the drag portion. Ninety-five percent of the people who like this game didn't know about tuning import cars before *The Fast and the Furious*, just like you."

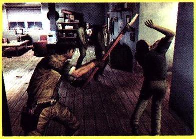
Your score: ●●●○○

Eric Fung
Stircrazy1892@yahoo.com

What we said: "Rich with attitude and cool gizmos, the underground racing scene is the perfect playground for videogames, and EA has done a magnificent job bringing the spectacle to PS2."

Our score: ●●●●◐

RESIDENT EVIL: OUTBREAK



What you said: "I'm not a huge *Resident Evil* fan. The series' sheer complexity has never really appealed to me. But the 'escape from a zombie-ridden town' approach caught my attention, and so did *Outbreak*'s innovative online play. So I preordered it thinking, 'What the heck, it looks solid, even if it is a *Resident Evil* game.' Two words: Big. Mistake.

"This is not the proper game for *RE* newbies. The online play bored me to death, the trial-and-error gameplay is really frustrating, and the controls suck. The graphics are praiseworthy—it's possibly the best-looking PS2 game available yet. I also like the wide selection of characters and their personalities. However, all the flaws add up to make *Outbreak* a big, fat disappointment."

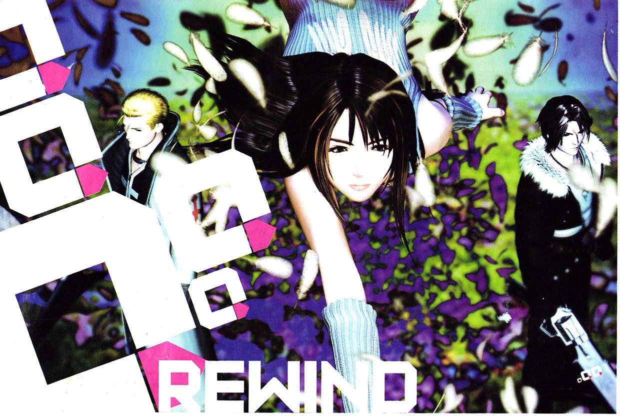
"ALL THE FLAWS ADD UP TO MAKE *OUTBREAK* A BIG DISAPPOINTMENT."

Your score: ●●◐○○

BBGunn1991@aol.com

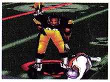
What we said: "It really is a solid survival-horror game that fans should check out. It just could have been so much better."

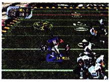
Our score: ●●●◐○

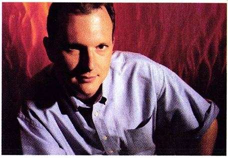


REWIND

LET US ALL GAZE LOVINGLY UPON SEPTEMBER OF 1999







WHO KNEW?
When we first looked at *Final Fantasy VIII*, we had no idea there would be such a huge backlash about the realistic character models.

Neatly redeeming ourselves for the fairly underwhelming showing in August of 1999, September's issue featured plenty of meaty coverage.

VIII IS ENOUGH

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
Final Fantasy VIII

September's cover story was devoted to *Final Fantasy VIII*—the first *Final Fantasy* to hit after *FFVII* exploded onto the RPG market. It was a big deal, and we treated it as such, exploring the game with obsessive depth. Yay, us.

TALL TALES

This was also a very substantial month for news coverage. Leading off the section was an extensive interview with Phil Harrison, then head of research and development at Sony CEA, in which he let drop a few tasty tidbits about the PS2. Check out this passage: "The technology has a number of uses outside of the core gaming area...like being able to take a video feed and manipulate that into a game, so you can paint yourself into a Chicago Bulls winning team and play alongside them." At the time, we probably dismissed this comment as pie-in-the-sky speculation. Then EyeToy came along and made us feel really stupid.

REVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

All in all, this was a pretty solid month for reviews. In addition to *NFL Blitz 2000*'s pack-leading five-disc score, we awarded four discs to *Rising Zan: The Samurai Gunman*, *WWF Attitude*, *Sled Storm*, and—irony of ironies—*Driver*, in whose review we mention the game being released "with a minimum of marketing hype." Ah, the good old days.

REVIEW LOWLIGHTS

Subpar Eastern adventure *Soul of the Samurai* and subpar *Blitz* clone *NFL Xtreme 2* both earned a measly 1.5 discs. Not god-awful, but by no means good.

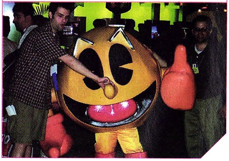
DEMO MADNESS

UmJammer Lammy was the marquee title this month, followed by the excellent *Sled Storm* (whose PS2 incarnation was another franchise remix gone wrong, incidentally). But for all those hardcore *Final Fantasy fans*, we also had a demo of *Chocobo Racing*. Aren't we swell?

CHART TOPPERS

Five years ago this month, the first *Driver* was at the top of the U.K. charts. This month, *DRIV3R* is at the top of the U.S. charts. Coincidence? Or nefarious government plot? You decide. Anyway, back in September of '99, *Lunar: Silver Star Story* topped the U.S. charts, with *Syphon Filter*, *WWF Warzone*, *Triple Play 2000*, and *R4: Ridge Racer Type 4* rounding out the top five. «

CAPTION CONTEST WINNER
"You know, these game-specific controllers have gotten way out of hand." —Alex Thompson, Charleston, WV



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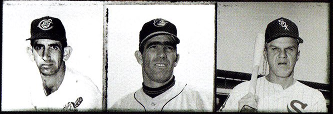

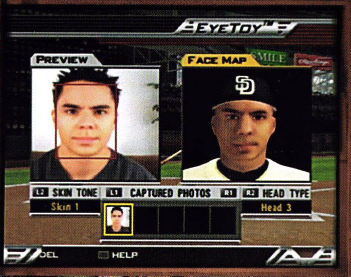
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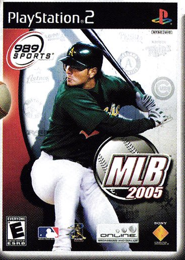
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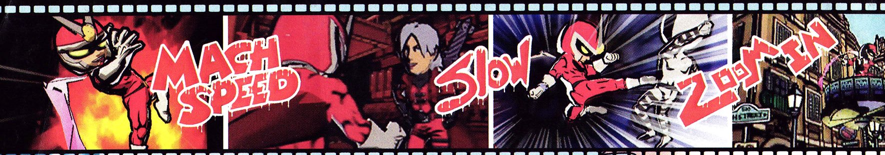
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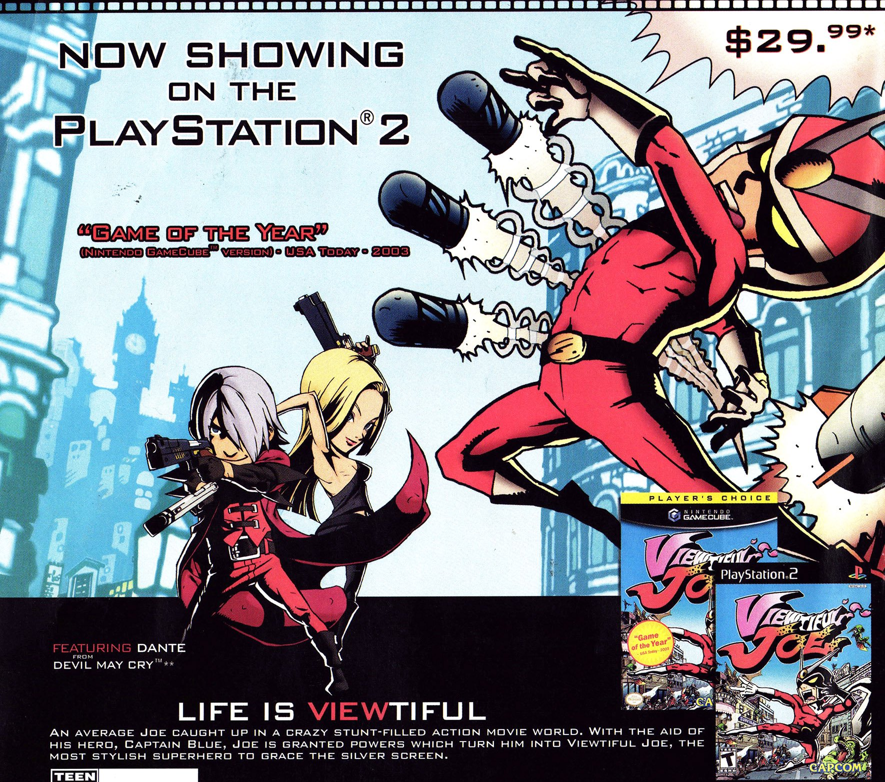
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